PLAYSTATION 4



PLAY

TM

ISSUE 248

50 NEW PS4, PS3 & VITA GAMES INSIDE

FIFA 15

How EA is preparing for this season's title race

HUGE FIRST HANDS-ON!

CALL OF DUTY

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ASSASSIN'S CREED ROGUE

Sneak a peek at the PS3's answer to Unity

BLOODBORNE

Hands-on with the PS4 exclusive Souls successor

EVOLVE

Inside the monster shooter hell-bent on destroying PSN

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PROJECT CARS

Under the hood of the most realistic racer ever made

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WWE 2K15 **THE EVIL WITHIN**
THE ORDER: 1886 PES 2015
SOMA **FAR CRY 4** DIABLO III
DRIVECLUB DYING LIGHT
BATTLEFIELD HARDLINE
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Welcome PLAY

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IT'S ALL OVER



TO ANYONE I promised to help grind out some new gear in *Soul Sacrifice* or *Toukiden*, I'm sorry. To anyone I made plans with for dinner, drinks or other social engagements, I'm sorry. To anyone I enthused about *Diablo III* co-op with, I'm sorry. And to anyone who had any ideas on seeing me before the end of the year in a setting that wasn't either the **Play** office or my front room, I'm sorry. I have a copy of *Destiny* now. It's all over. I'm sorry.

In truth, I probably won't be a hermit Guardian for all that long. For me, the main rush with a new game is getting to the endgame content, because that's where most of the games I enjoy *really* begin. There's a thrill to the journey itself, sure, and I still enjoy that part of the game. But I just want to be where all the cool shit is happening as soon as possible, and that often means racing through content up to that point just to maximise how much time I get to spend in what I consider the best part of most games.

That's partly why I'm not particularly worried about *Destiny*'s relatively low level cap of 20, nor really about how much there is to do before you reach that number. As long as there's plenty to do *when* you get there, I'll be happy. And maybe, just maybe, I'll be able to squeeze in some other games once I can take my foot off the throttle and enjoy the endgame at my own pace.

I hope so anyway, because even with all the recent delays, there's still an insane amount of awesome games landing before the end of the year. You'll find the latest on many of them within these very pages, from a duo of stunning new *Assassin's Creed* games to PS4's most photorealistic racer, *Project CARS*. I'd offer to come join you for a few games but, you know... *Destiny*. I'm sorry.

Enjoy the issue, and I'll see ya on the moon.

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CURRENTLY PLAYING
Destiny (PS4)



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Your guide to the exciting future of PlayStation

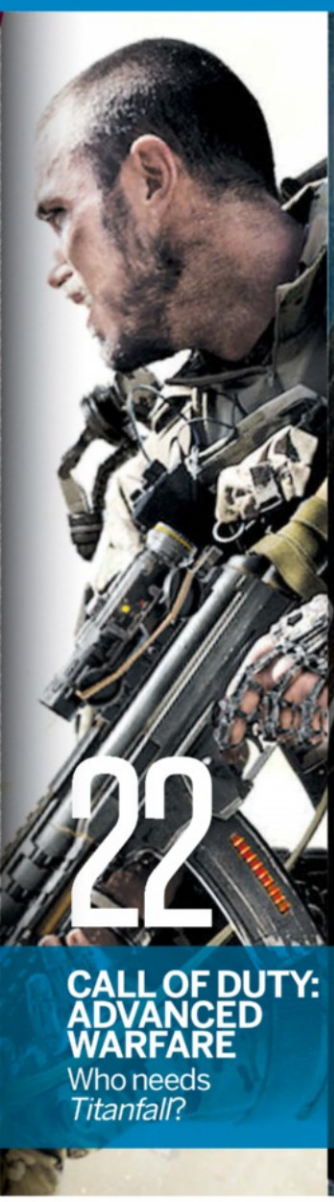
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THE STATE OF PLAY
Awesome games, handily broken down by genre

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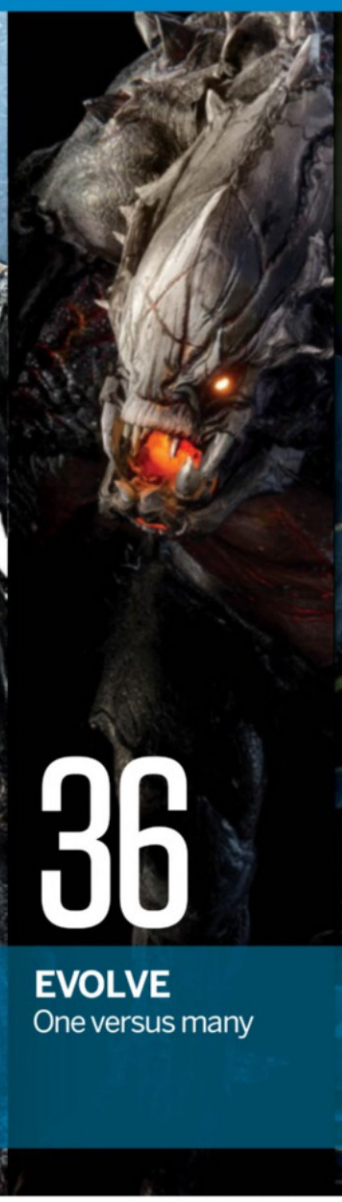




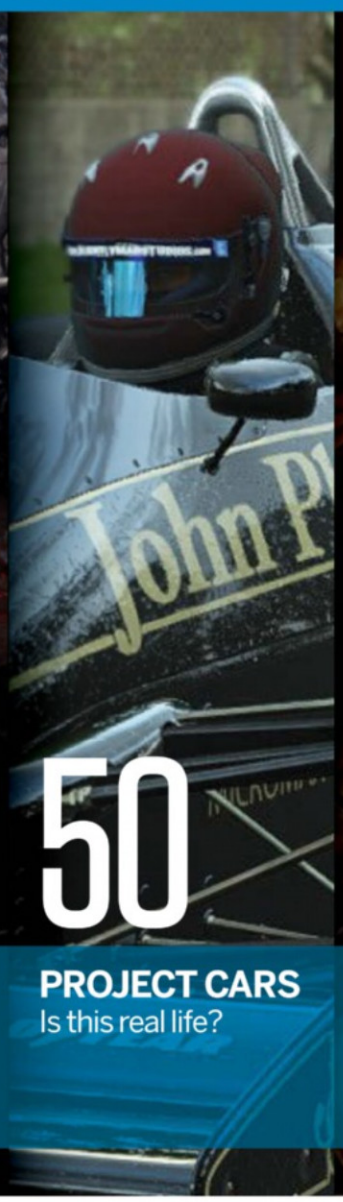
CALL OF DUTY: ADVANCED WARFARE
Who needs *Titanfall*?



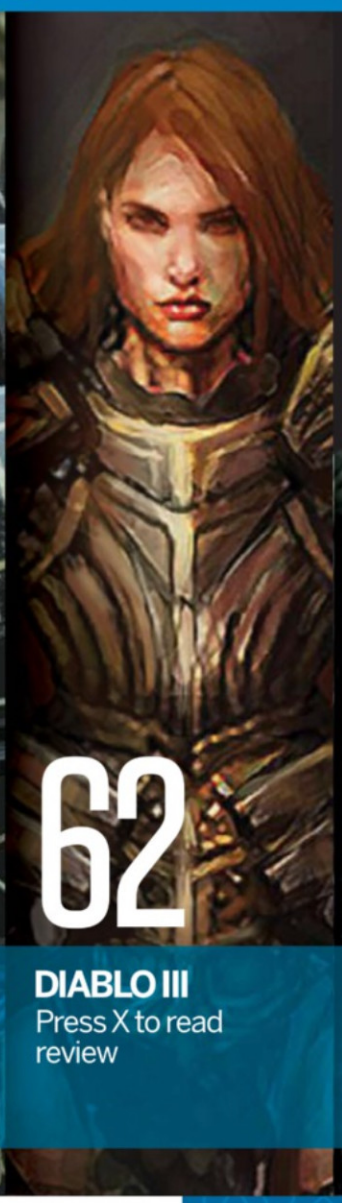
BLOODBORNE
Death is coming



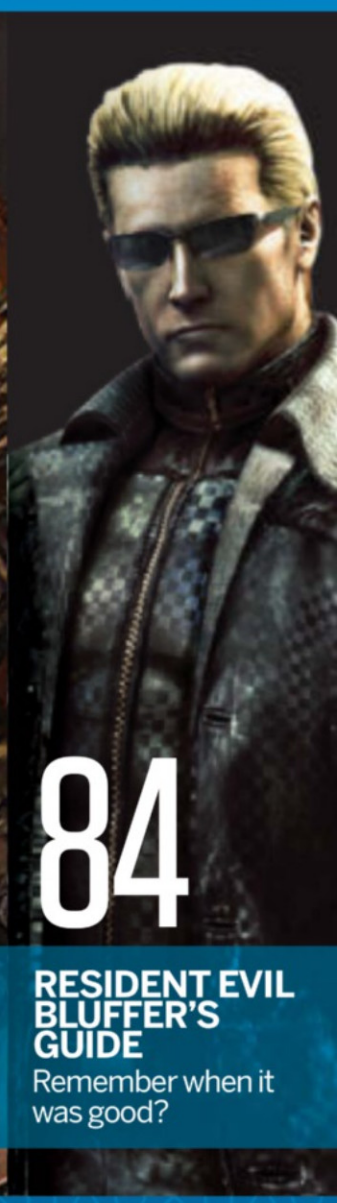
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One versus many



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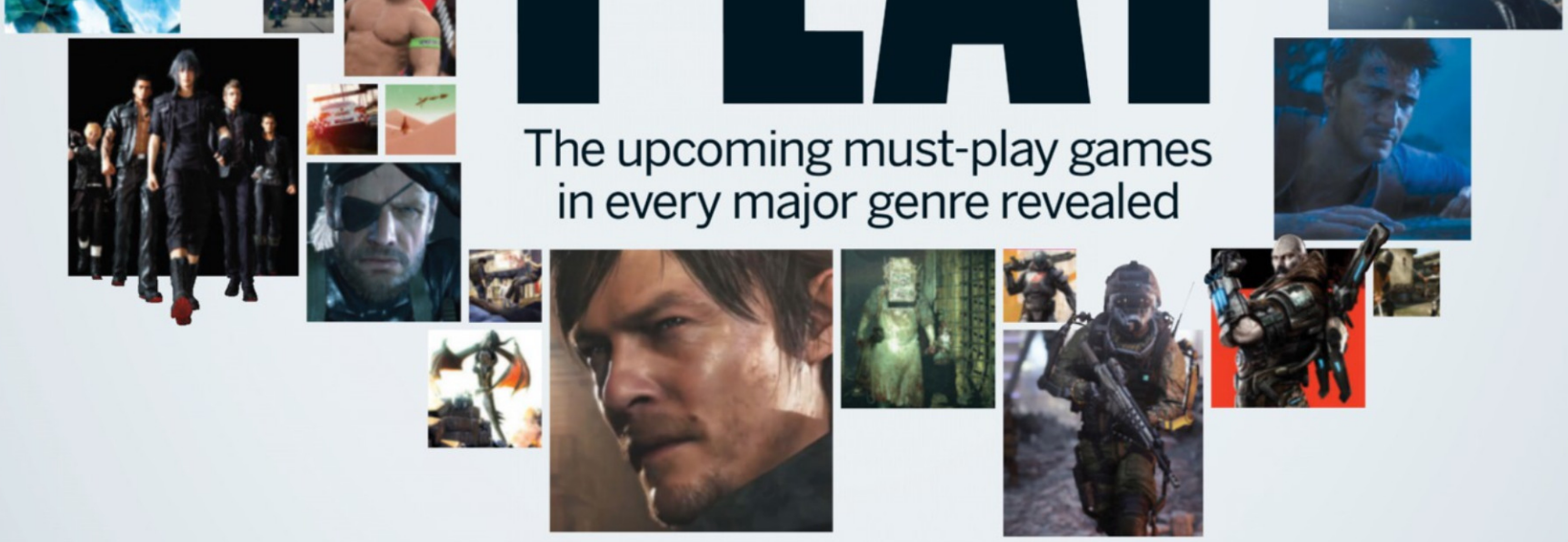
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STATE OF PLAY

The upcoming must-play games in every major genre revealed



All release dates estimated and/or subject to change

THE ORDER: 1886

ON YOUR FREE DVD

ETA: FEBRUARY 2015

The early stages of a new generation are always full of great moments where you see flashes of what your new console can *really* do. From the jaw-dropping visuals of *Killzone Shadow Fall* and *inFamous: Second Son* to seeing how much of a leap the next wave of game would make thanks to reveals like *Uncharted 4* and *Bloodborne*, PS4 has had plenty of these moments already, with the most recent being the new, expertly cut-together trailer for Ready At Dawn's alternate history shooter, *The Order: 1886*.

We've seen extended cinematic sections and played lengthy gameplay sequences already, but this two-minute snapshot of the game was the first time we've really seen it all come together as one cinematic whole. We've watched that part where Grayson walks into a cathedral that looks to be made from more polygons than the entire PSone back catalogue about 30 times – it was just another of those awesome moments where we knew we were on the right team.

A 21:9 aspect ration helps both with making the game look more cinematic as well as reducing screen size to further boost visual fidelity – trust us, we've played enough letterboxed games in our time to know that you don't even notice it after the first 20 minutes or so. And with tight third-person shooter mechanics, an arsenal of science-breaking weapons provided by one Nikola Tesla and some incredible set pieces that really show off the power of PS4, it's safe to say that next year is gonna start with a bang.

IN THREE WORDS:
Railguns, monsters, moustaches

"WE'VE WATCHED THAT PART WHERE GRAYSON WALKS INTO A CATHEDRAL ABOUT 30 TIMES"



△○×□ Yes, we know the weapons aren't historically accurate. No, we don't care.

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

It looks sorta interesting, but there's nothing to say that there'll be any major difference from Battlefield 4.
Thomas Davies

I was very excited when I heard about the idea, I imagined 'Heat style shoot outs' and MP like the much underrated Kane and Lynch modes. BUT then I played the beta and it was just reskinned Battlefield on slightly smaller maps and bags on money instead of flags etc.
Gaz Taylor

Nothing more than a glorified addon/mod to Battlefield 4.
@NaughtyGods

BATTLEFIELD HARDLINE

ON YOUR FREE DVD

ETA: MARCH 2015

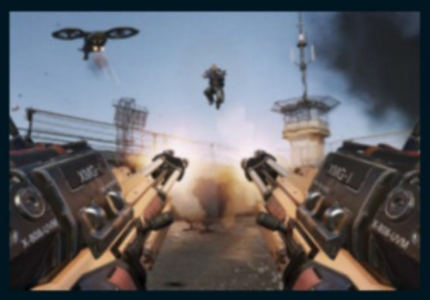
After the shitstorm that erupted around *Battlefield 4*'s broken online component (read: the most popular part of the game) last year, it's not hard to see why this has been delayed until early next year, especially considering that the team has been promising that *Hardline* will work properly from day one. It's not really the kind of claim developers should even need to be making, to be honest, but at least it'll serve as a warning sign to all the other teams that might think it's okay to release first and finish later. Consumers have spoken and guess what? It isn't.

Still, it has to be said that *Hardline* is coming together pretty well. Multiplayer was great fun when we played it earlier in the year, somewhere between the large-scale battles of the core series and other, tighter team-based experiences like *Payday* and *Rainbow Six*. The latter influence is especially evident in *Hardline*'s new hostage rescue mode, which should make things a little interesting now that both this and *Siege* seem to be targeting similar launch windows.

The team's attention has recently turned to the solo campaign, which looks to be mixing things up just as much as the online component. This time out, it's an episodic affair meant to mimic the structure of a TV show, with stealth as viable an option as doing a full-on war all over the bad guys. It looks pretty cool, but raises one serious question – is this *really* a *Battlefield* game, or just a new shooter released under the popular banner? Many fans are calling it the latter, which means Visceral Games will still have a lot to prove to people even if it can get the netcode working perfectly.

IN THREE WORDS: Cops and robbers

"MULTIPLAYER WAS GREAT FUN WHEN WE PLAYED IT EARLIER IN THE YEAR"



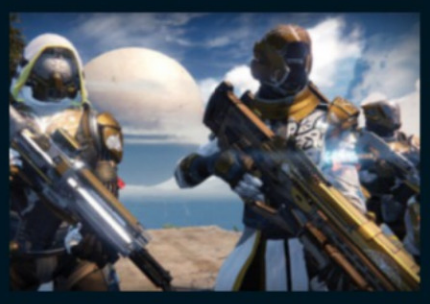
COD: ADVANCED WARFARE

Don't worry – you didn't buy a magazine with *COD* on the cover only to get a mere 70 words on it. It just seemed a little off to run a feature charting the biggest upcoming releases without at least mentioning the biggest of the lot. Fast-forward to page 22 for the full scoop on Sledgehammer Games' take on the future of multiplayer. It's looking pretty special...



EVOLVE

Pitting four player-controlled humanoid hunters against one person playing as a growing, changing monster, *Evolve* is one of the most interesting new concepts on this list. Turns out it plays well too, giving us all the more hope for the game when it emerges from its cocoon. There are still more hunters and monsters to be announced, and we can't wait to see how they play.



DESTINY

We rinsed the alpha, battered the beta and now we've just started doing it all over again in the full game. The best part? Bungie's epic has been more enjoyable every time we've played it and now we never have to stop. Blending classic FPS gunplay with RPG leveling and elements of MMO design, *Destiny* is incredible. Stop reading this and get back to playing it already...



△○×□ If you're used to 8v8 online play, this will blow you away.

PLANETSIDE 2

ETA: NOVEMBER

We've been talking about this bad boy since before the PS4 was even released, and with good reason. In terms of scale and spectacle, *PlanetSide* is like nothing else you've played before, bringing MMO player counts to team-based shooter mechanics as entire wars kick off involving thousands of human players. It's also one of the better examples of free-to-play done right.

But here we are, a year down the line with literally no updates on the PS4 version of the game outside of 'it's still coming' to reassure us. Our main concern is that Sony may have missed the bus with this one – *Destiny* offers a tighter, more controlled FPS experience and is in players' hands right now (where it'll likely stay for some time thanks to all the planned additional content), while the announcement of FPS experience du jour *DayZ* coming to PS4 only serves to steal yet more thunder from SOE's game. *PlanetSide* really needed to be ready for the console's launch window in order to succeed, the relative lack of games meaning that everyone who just bought the hardware would have had plenty of time to put into it. We'll still play it when it does eventually arrive, because we know it's great.

But the sad truth is that we'll have so much else to play by the time it does eventually arrive that it won't nearly get the investment it deserves. Still, expect to see some of these free-to-play games pre-loaded on new consoles in the near future – the chance to boast that even the solus console actually comes with several free games is surely too good an opportunity for Sony to miss.

IN THREE WORDS: F2P MMO FPS



△○×□ Left stick to move, right stick to blow stuff to bits. Fine by us...

ALIENATION

ON YOUR FREE DVD

ETA: MAY 2015

All you need to say is "more Housemarque" and we're in. Sure, *Dead Nation* was a bit dull, but *Super Stardust* and *Resogun* stand up as two of our favourite games on their respective consoles. This new shooter from the team repeats the usual twin-stick formula, sticking players in mechs to carve their way through wave after wave of horrible aliens. More *Resogun* DLC first though, please – the last batch was superb.

IN THREE WORDS: Housemarque embraces mechs



HOLLOWPOINT

ON YOUR FREE DVD

ETA: APRIL 2015

A fusion of 2D side-scrolling shooter mechanics and 3D shooter sections, *Hollowpoint* clearly wants to be a 21st Century *Contra*. Which is fine, obviously. Combining these two different gameplay disciplines will be a challenge, as will doing so with procedural level design and dynamic mission objectives. But if the team can pull it off, it could be really cool. Why are we so cautious about it, then? Ruffian's last game was *Crackdown 2* on 360. Yeah...

IN THREE WORDS: Confusing 2.5D shooter

IN THE MEANTIME △ **DESTINY** It kinda helps that one of the games discussed here is actually out already. Get to saving the world, Guardian!

TEAM PICKS



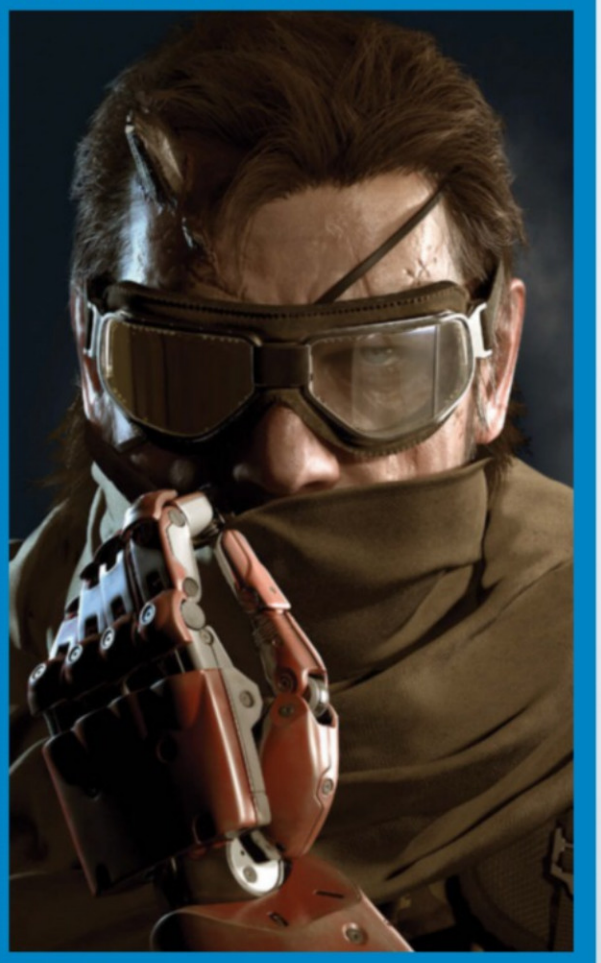
METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

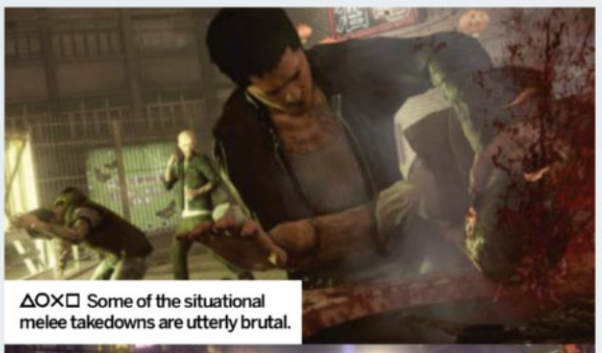
ETA: SEPTEMBER 2015

I've picked this before. It's boring really. It must bore Luke every time I yell "HELLO SNAKE!" at him in the office, or every time I growl "Kaz..." when the lovely HR lady brings me my pay slip (she's called Caroline), or every time I point at people like Revolver Ocelot and whisper "you're pretty good...". I'm winding myself up just writing about it – I've gotten out of hand, truth be told – but I simply live and breathe this franchise.

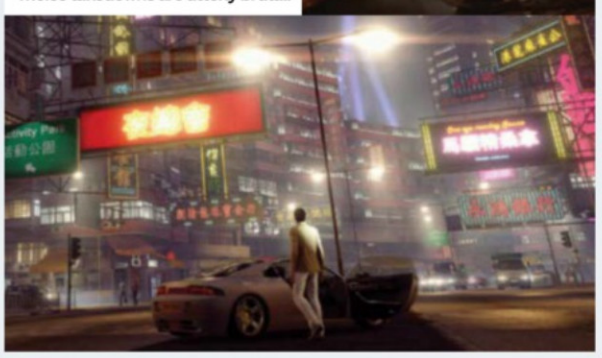
Ground Zeroes was genuinely brilliant – too short, my arse – and every tiny gameplay clip that appears of *The Phantom Pain* is making the wait so much worse. The box stuff at Gamescom was strange but fun, but it was the trailer that was leaked just prior to E3 that made me insanely excited. It's all gonna kick off. Why was Big Boss in a jeep with Skull Face? That's what it looked like anyhow. Also, that's a bloody Metal Gear in the background at the end – is that the Metal Gear that Big Boss gets his hands on and takes to Outer Heaven?! If it isn't, there'll be tears.

IN THREE WORDS: A big place





△○×□ Some of the situational melee takedowns are utterly brutal.



SLEEPING DOGS

ETA: OCTOBER

Say what you like about this new trend for full HD remasters of existing games – developers are sure as hell picking the right games for the treatment. *Tomb Raider, GTA V, The Last Of Us, Journey*... 9s and 10s, the lot. And while *Sleeping Dogs* was ace on PS3, those who have seen the PC version know why it deserves a remaster – the neon-soaked streets of Hong Kong are simply stunning and its something that the PS3 version could only really hint at. If you never played it, it's *GTA* in Asia with melee combat that actually works, with context specific combat moves that see you batter the snot out of bad guys with anything to hand. Also, you can put people in bins. It's really good – as Square would say, 'please be excited'.

IN THREE WORDS: 1080p Hong Kong

GRAND THEFT AUTO V

ETA: NOVEMBER

Hands up who is going to buy *Grand Theft Auto V* again on PS4? While we appreciate some people will be angered by what they see to be a money-grabbing scheme, we offer this rebuke: nobody is forcing you to buy the game. That *GTA V* would eventually receive an enhanced PC port was inevitable – it's happened for just about every *GTA* game. Considering that's happening regardless, it just makes sense to also release the improved version on console. Sure, it will make more money for Rockstar, but it also offers us more options.

Let's face it: *Grand Theft Auto V* was a phenomenal game, and the chance to experience such a great open world on a more powerful system is an exciting one.

IN THREE WORDS: City without limits





△○×□ The real question: can we play as the giant underwater skeleton?

WILD

ON YOUR FREE DVD

ETA: OCTOBER 2015

There we were thinking that Michel Ancel was working on another *Rayman* game or finally getting round to properly knuckling down on *Beyond Good & Evil 2*, and then this happens. *Wild* is an open-world survival game set in a pseudo-prehistoric era where you seem to be able to play as any living creature in the world, from humans to wolves or eagles to fish. It's an interesting concept, kinda like *Tokyo Jungle* in a way but without the option to play as a Pomeranian. You'll craft, hunt and form allegiances with others but beyond that, we don't know all that much. It's still early, but we're certainly as excited to learn more about this ambitious indie project as we are for similar clarifications on Hello Games' stunning *No Man's Sky*.

IN THREE WORDS: Or 'Conan's Sky'

IN THE MEANTIME

WATCH DOGS It was a long time coming and didn't live up to the hype, but the online component is worth the asking price alone.



△○×□ Any day now, we'll be enjoying our blocky creations on PS4.

MINECRAFT

ETA: OCTOBER

Seeing as how you can now play *Minecraft* on just about every other electronic device on the market, we're surprised it's taken so long for the phenomenon to arrive on PS4. Not like it really matters, since people seem just as excited for the game as they were when it first exploded onto the scene years ago. What can you expect to see on PS4 over the existing PS3 version of the game? Significantly bigger worlds is the main thing, important only if you're in it for the exploration of even bigger randomly generated worlds or you were a few blocks shy of finishing your scale model of Russia in the PS3 version.

IN THREE WORDS: About damn time

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

liked AC4 but I'm glad they're taking it back to a city. Hoping for that 'social stealth' they hyped up for AC1.
@Higgie_Baby

YouTube I hate how people prey on the series for being the same, of course its going to be sameish it wouldn't be assassins creed! Am I a sheep for following this series? Maybe, but I damn well love assassinating people over and over again >:D
Anti Cronus Ampora

ON YOUR FREE DVD

ASSASSIN'S CREED: UNITY

ETA: NOVEMBER

We can't help but feel that *Unity* might be something of a step backwards after the outstanding seafaring action of *Black Flag*, but perhaps that's not entirely a bad thing. *Rogue* still exists to scratch that particular itch, after all (as does *Black Flag* – hot damn, that game is HUGE) and it's not like *ACII* was a bad game. Until *Black Flag* came along, it was the best in the series, so it'll actually be interesting to see if Ubisoft can still deliver a compelling open-world experience without something like the sailing gimmick to fall back on.

It has certainly nailed the first step and all you have to do is sit the game's map of Paris alongside an actual historical one to see just how much authenticity is key here. From central landmarks (with one towering metal exception) to outlying boroughs, it all looks to be present and correct, just ready for you to parkour over or spill blood onto. The setting is pretty awesome too, among the most tumultuous European periods and with loads of well-known facts and events to riff on and plenty of mysteries for Ubisoft to pin on its hooded heroes.

Yes, that's heroes, plural – *Assassin's Creed* is going co-op for the first time, allowing up to four friends to team up to complete contracts together. It's perhaps not the most obvious inclusion in a game that is already arguably too easy, but we'll never turn down the opportunity to play together with friends. Presumably, the series' inexplicably popular competitive multiplayer modes will make it over too, as well as those horrible modern day sections. We'd love to live in a world where that shit could just be wiped out entirely, but Ubisoft still seems to be under the impression that those bits are good or something. News flash, guys: ils sont ennuyeux.

IN THREE WORDS: 'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité'

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



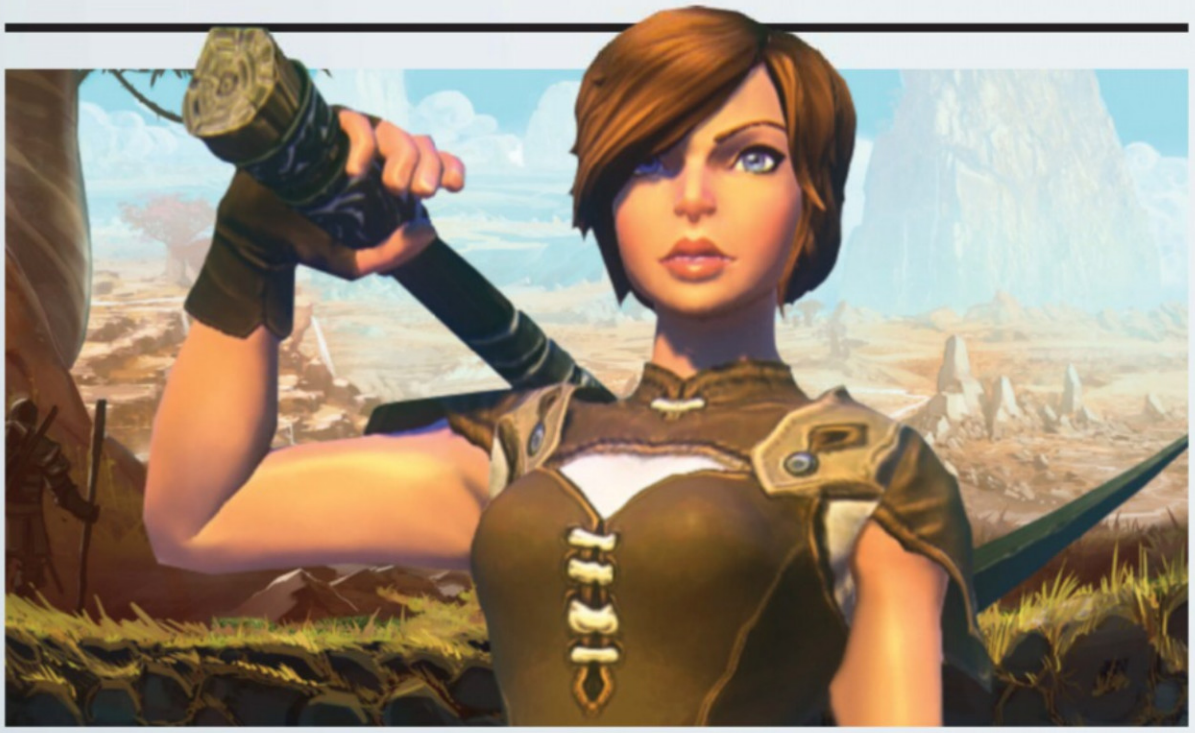
△○×□ We already like Noctis and pals more than Lightning's crew.

FINAL FANTASY XV

ETA: SEPTEMBER 2015

The first *Final Fantasy* on a new platform is always exciting, largely because few developers know how to show off new hardware better than Square. *VII*'s crude 3D characters were enough to blast the series out of the 16-bit era in style, *X* had full voice acting for the first time and *XIII*, despite being despised by many, still looks great today. This first 'proper' PS4 *FF* looks to be taking a more action-heavy approach more in line with *Lightning Returns* or *Kingdom Hearts* – menu-driven combat can be fused brilliantly with real-time action as both those games prove, this time made all the sweeter by *XV*'s gorgeous graphics.

IN THREE WORDS: *Versus XIII* reborn

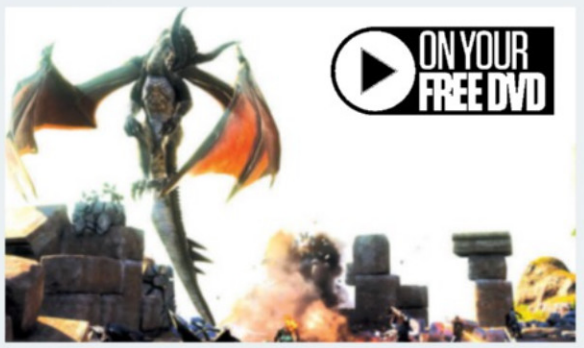


EVERQUEST NEXT

ETA: NOVEMBER 2015

Everyone who has been banging on for years that MMOs can't work on console would do well to remember that *FFXI* came out on PS2 and that *Phantasy Star Online* managed to work just fine on the Dreamcast in 2000. With the right treatment, they can definitely work – just look how good *FFXIV* is on PS4, for instance – but this new SOE project is even more impressive. The whole world is made out of voxels so can be destroyed by spell effects or hacked away, plus user creation will play a huge part – players can build as well as destroy, even selling their creations to the highest bidder.

IN THREE WORDS: Massively multiplayer *Minecraft*



DRAGON AGE: INQUISITION

ETA: NOVEMBER

Stepping up to the plate after two strikes is never easy, but there's a confidence in BioWare's stride going into *Inquisition* that makes it seem like the horrors of *Dragon Age II* and *Mass Effect 3* (or, specifically, *that* ending) never happened. Gameplay appears to fall closer to *Origins* than its sequel, and that's a good thing – between this and the varied settings we've already seen, many of our issues with the second proper *Dragon Age* (we're not counting standalone expansion *Awakening*) have already been addressed. It's recently been delayed by a month, presumably purely to avoid the Week Of Death at the start of October – we're not sure what a few weeks more development could realistically add to a game on this scale, after all.

IN THREE WORDS: BioWare's fantasy redemption



KINGDOM COME: DELIVERANCE

ETA: OCTOBER 2015

In a genre where dragons, wizards and elves are the norm, it's crazy to think that the game that feels most interesting and original right now is the one with none of that silliness – the one that's looking to create a fantasy-RPG experience without the fantasy, for want of a better way of putting it. *Kingdom Come* has more in common with PC strategy games like the *Total War* series than most of its RPG stablemates, simply because of how faithful the team wants to be with the historical content. It'll have a first-person viewpoint and swordplay, sure, but the *Skyrim* comparisons end there – if you try your Dragonshouts here, you're just likely to piss off the mean old knight with the broadsword. And that's never a good idea.

IN THREE WORDS: Serf and turf

IN THE MEANTIME △ **FFXIV: A REALM REBORN** Square's MMO came back from the dead with this updated version, and it's excellent on PS4.

www.imagineshop.co.uk

THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

ETA: FEBRUARY 2015

You probably thought *Skyrim* was pretty big, right? Yeah, so did most sensible people. But CD Projekt RED is looking to go even bigger with the closing part of its epic RPG trilogy and the last hurrah for its silver-haired monster-hunter-for-hire Geralt of Rivia. He's been expanding his horizons at every turn, with the first chapter a PC exclusive and the second also getting a slightly clumsy 360 port, while this is the first game in the series both to go truly multi-format and, more importantly, to have been designed from the start with console players in mind.

You see, the main problem with the 360 version of the previous game was the control scheme, with buttons and shortcuts all over the place as the team scrambled to get all of the functionality of a keyboard into a controller. Here, it's all been streamlined to make it feel right with a pad – kinda important in a game as big as this – so exploring this gigantic fantasy world will never be anything other than an utter joy.

IN THREE WORDS: Biggest RPG ever

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

YouTube Damn I can not wait for this game to come out. The combat looks amazing as always. I hope that the ability from The Witcher 1 multiple people hit animation comes back. I loved it when he leaned backwards as he swung his sword in a sweeping motion to hit all around.
Calmingspeed s

ON YOUR FREE DVD



"THIS IS THE FIRST GAME IN THE SERIES TO GO TRULY MULTI-FORMAT"



ON YOUR FREE DVD

△○×□ We're not the least bit sad to see the back of magic. Screw you, casters!

BLOODBORNE

ETA: FEBRUARY 2015

We might have mentioned this once or twice, but we love *Dark Souls* here on **Play**. So as you might expect, we're proper excited by the idea of the team behind the original *Dark Souls* (as opposed to the secondary team that did *Dark Souls II*) bringing the same core experience to PS4 in what looks to be an even grimmer setting. Speedier gameplay means you won't be able to rely on sitting behind a shield and waiting for the right moment, with even more new mechanics similarly designed to promote aggressive play. It's *Dark Souls Revengeance*, if you will, only with fewer nanomachines (well, we'd imagine) and quite a lot more blood. Core gameplay feels similar to earlier titles like *Demon's Souls*, which fans will surely love, but there are plenty of new additions too. Bring it the hell on.

IN THREE WORDS: *Souls* on PS4

DRIVECLUB

ETA: OCTOBER

ON YOUR FREE DVD

It's incredible to think that Sony was originally planning to ship PS4 consoles bundled with *Driveclub*. And yet here we are, nearly a year down the line, and the changeable weather effects of Evolution's new racer will *still* not be ready for launch, instead following in an update shortly after. To be fair, these effects look like nothing we've seen in a racer before, but it just goes to show how optimistic Sony was in the first place that even the core game might be ready for that original November 2013 launch window.

Similar to its weather effects, though, *Driveclub* has grown phenomenally since it was first announced and playing it today, it's a different game to that we played a year ago. Handling is significantly tighter and while it still straddles the line between realistic and arcade, it seems to have at least found its spot within this odd middle ground. It has even been attracting comparisons to *Project Gotham Racing* with the way it blends the two schools of driving mechanics, which can only be seen as a compliment – Bizarre Creations' racer was best in class for years, after all.

The layer of community activity on top of all that just makes things even more interesting, an evolution of EA's Autolog system that literally tracks everything you do and turns it into an in-game challenge for your friends to try and beat. And best of all, there'll still be a free PS Plus version, allowing you to play with and challenge friends with a limited range of tracks and cars without spending a penny. Bargain.

IN THREE WORDS: Next up: weather

"DRIVECLUB HAS GROWN PHENOMENALLY SINCE IT WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED"

△○×□ Grab the free PS Plus Edition next month and try it for yourself!





WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

Might be enough to get me to take a ps plus sub
Phil Hall

want to but no one is going to get the game on friends list
Michael Jordan

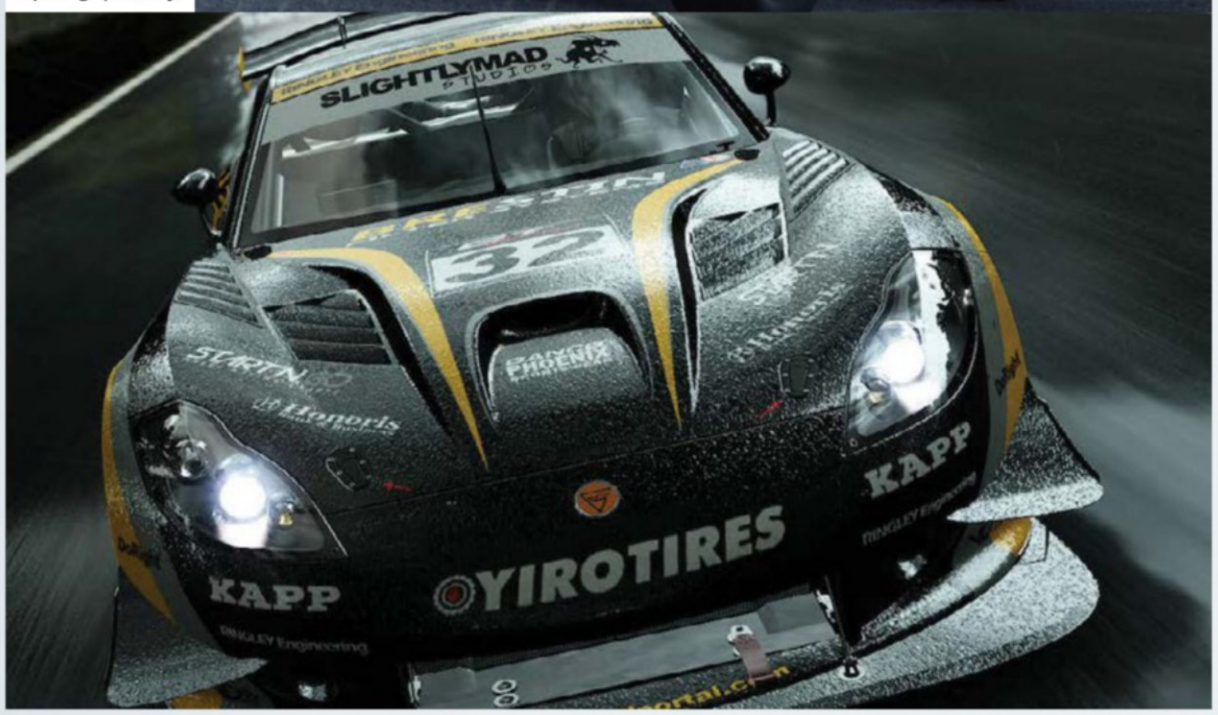
Then u need more PS friends!!
Dan Lamb

Looks cool and all but i havent seen any japanese cars so far. Is there any word on how many different cars there will be in the game?
SnowTheGoon

www.imagineshop.co.uk



△○×□ No, this isn't a photograph. Really.



PROJECT CARS

ETA: NOVEMBER

This really is one of the great 21st Century success stories so far, a PC-centric team of driving enthusiasts taking to crowd-funding to make their dream a reality. That last word is the hook on which the whole thing hangs, actually – from handling to visuals, *Project Cars* plans to be the most true-to-life racer you've ever played, albeit with all manner of assists in place to help those who aren't pro race drivers turn in times that suggest otherwise. It's a stunning piece of software and it's coming to PS4 – Kazunori Yamauchi and Polyphony should probably be worried, since this is going to beat *Gran Turismo* to the punch and better yet, it's going to do so with VR support.

Yes, *Project Cars*' PC origins mean that it's already up and running on Oculus Rift and Morpheus support is coming as well, so you'll be able to step into the cockpit of a supercar and experience every bend as though you were actually there. We can think of few better ways to experience the new generation of VR headsets than this and with visuals like those that the Slightly Mad team is promising (and indeed delivering), it's going to be one hell of a ride.

IN THREE WORDS: Better than reality



F1 2014

ETA: OCTOBER

Call us all the names you like but we really can't stand to watch F1 races these days. It's become the motorsport equivalent of Ryu versus Ryu – it's just not interesting any more. Having grown up with Psygnosis' amazing PSone game, though, we know how much fun an F1 game can be, so here's hoping the last last-gen Formula One title can emulate that. There are big changes afoot for the first PS4 version too, but you'll have to wait until next year to find out exactly what they are. Sorry.

IN THREE WORDS: Last PS3-only season

TEAM PICKS



THE CREW

ON YOUR FREE DVD

ETA: NOVEMBER

Despite *Project Cars* having the best grass I've ever seen in a videogame, I've been hyped for the open world of *The Crew* since long before we saw anything of *Project Cars*. With an approximate map size of 5,000 square kilometres, there's sure to be enough there to have a different experience every time you pick up the game. From escaping the police in a high speed chase to overcoming the 510 crew of the underground racing scene, there's a variety of races to win and ways to upgrade and customise your car to become the fastest on the grid. Not only does it have the vast selection of race types, but it's been claimed by Ubisoft that it will have the widest variety of car types seen in a racing game. I'm just hoping that includes a Vauxhall Nova to put a 'sick bodykit' on.

IN THREE WORDS: Trans-American road trip



△○×□ Pretty much all racing disciplines are catered for in *The Crew*.

IN THE MEANTIME

NEED FOR SPEED RIVALS There's not a great deal of choice for racing fans on PS4 right now, but EA's launch title is damn good.

FIFA 15

ETA: SEPTEMBER

ON YOUR FREE DVD

Just like clockwork, a new *FIFA* rolls around every September to fix some of the problems of the previous game but inevitably create a few more in the process. This year's main fix is to improve goalkeepers so they no longer just flap at any half-decent shot or jump out the way of an easy save as if the ball was on fire. Now, they're far more switched on and players will have to factor in keeper positioning far more as a result – punt a ball anywhere within the reach of a solid keeper and he's likely to gather it up or at least confidently deal with the threat, while making him stretch is the best way to force an error or one of those classic rebound tap-ins.

An interesting factor in this will be the new emotion engine at the core of the game, with rivalries developing over the course of matches and full seasons and every aspect of each game having a real gameplay impact on every player on the pitch. We talked before about how this may influence outfield players – the need for a last-minute goal firing them up for that inspired assist, or a crushing defeat causing them to lose faith and their play to suffer – but it's perhaps even more interesting when applied to keepers. For a low-ranking team desperate to steal a point, a goalie might push himself to his limits to keep the scores tied as the whistle looms, while one who has already conceded several hat tricks is more likely to watch as yet another bobbles over the line within easy reach. It's like the usual *FIFA* 'scripting' people are always banging on about, basically, but with the good stuff more likely to happen when you need it and the bad stuff more likely when it really doesn't matter any more anyway. We'll take that.

IN THREE WORDS: Keepers are better

"A GOALIE MIGHT PUSH HIMSELF TO HIS LIMITS TO KEEP THE SCORES TIED AS THE WHISTLE LOOMS"

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

continue to fight the good fight for Pro Evolution Soccer.
@NokkonWud

Can't wait for FIFA. Biggest fix needed is to allow changing goalie and:or shirts to avoid clashes - basic and very annoying!
@CB4Luke

YouTube fifa sucks im sorry its just like cod and battlefield nothing new just the same game with small changes.
Xpar somtin

YouTube Why Messi is again the main character ?
John Robinson



△○×□ If you know what's good for you, never eat Cena's last Jaffa Cake.

WWE 2K15

ETA: OCTOBER

Is it so much to ask for a good wrestling game? WWE games haven't ruled this market since the PSone era *Smackdown!* titles and while the licensed games have been good for fans, those looking for great grappling gameplay have been forced over to the likes of *Def Jam: Fight For New York* (which had no right to be as good as it was) and *WWE All Stars*. Could this be the year that the main game reclaims the title belt?

In fairness, it's the best chance it has had in a good while. The series was only stagnating under THQ and while 2K didn't really have time to do much with the series between picking up the licence and releasing the game (which would already have been near-complete at the time), this time there's been a whole year to fix, balance and recreate the whole WWE experience.

The new visuals certainly don't hurt, although the lifelike character models will only serve to make the usual janky animations and awkward interactions between fighters that much more noticeable and off-putting. Much is apparently being done to address this and with 2K on board to supervise, we remain cautiously optimistic. Still, give us a good character creation suite (a given) and we'll be in either way.

IN THREE WORDS: Old meets new



△○×□ This will likely be the new lunchtime game of choice for us.

NHL 15

ETA: SEPTEMBER

One thing you'll be noticing from sports games is that visuals are able to improve proportionally to the size of the play area and number of players – *FIFA* looks nice, sure, but it's nothing compared to the fidelity of *EA UFC*. And EA's amazing new physics engine does wonders for the new *NHL*, which sits somewhere in between. See it in motion and it just looks real.

IN THREE WORDS: Speedy *FIFA* alternative



PES 2015

ETA: OCTOBER

We know, we're guilty (just like everyone else) of claiming that the *PES* magic is back every time we get the first whiff of it. But this year, with a new console and refined version of the FOX Engine, we're more inclined than ever to think that it might be true. Wishful thinking, we know, but there's no doubt that *FIFA* would benefit from some proper competition. That, and we really miss Master League.

IN THREE WORDS: The magic's back!



SNOW

ETA: JANUARY 2015

Activision may have closed down the studio behind the legendary *Tony Hawk's* franchise, but that doesn't mean extreme sports games are dead. It does, however, leave a decent-sized gap for indie teams to exploit, as Poppermost is doing with this free-to-play, open mountain winter sports experience, with both skis and snowboards to trick your way down the slopes on. Thanks, guys!

IN THREE WORDS: Free, open pistes

IN THE MEANTIME △ **FIFA 14** Yes, it still has its issues but the PS4 version still represents a huge leap over the previous generation's games...

ADVENTURE

TEAM PICKS



UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END

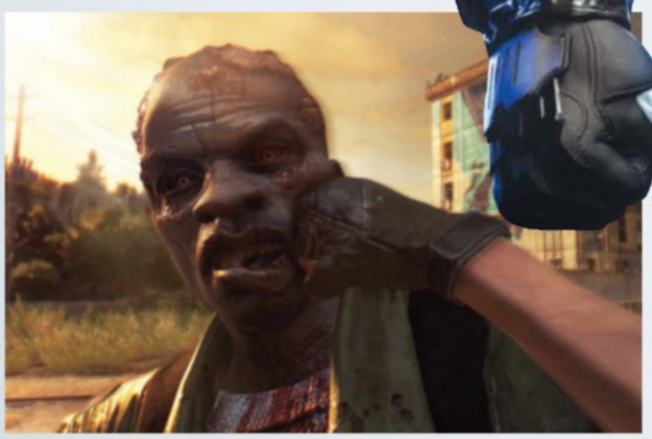
ETA: NOVEMBER 2015

C'mon... like I was going to pick anything else. I watch that E3 trailer at least three times a week and I'm still managing to find new ways to be impressed by it. I recently replayed *Uncharted 2* and it's still every bit as good as I remember (lose the Yeti-style bollocks next time though, please) so I can't wait what Naughty Dog has in store for what promises to be Drake's final adventure. Part of me really hopes this is it for Drake as the game's title suggests but at the same time, I'd be incredibly surprised if Sony had the balls to kill off so iconic a character...

IN THREE WORDS: One last time



△○×□ If this guy turns out to be The Joker, we'll eat the game disc...



DYING LIGHT

ETA: FEBRUARY 2015

Who wants to play Techland Roulette? There may not be a more erratic developer in the industry today, even within its own franchises – *Call Of Juarez* veers from *Bound In Blood* (decent) to *The Cartel* (dire) to *Gunslinger* (awesome) without batting an eyelid. Still, this is *Mirror's Edge* meets *Dead Island*, with brutal melee combat and the ability to run up/along/over anything you can see. What could possibly go wrong? Oh yeah, right. Techland.

IN THREE WORDS: Free-running past zombies

BATMAN: ARKHAM KNIGHT

ETA: MAY 2015

Rocksteady has worked miracles in turning Batman games from gaming laughing stock to award-winning GOTY contenders and while *Arkham Origins* was good, it lacked the imagination and magic that made the previous two games. Here, though, Rocksteady gets to give The Bat the sign-off he deserves, with a bigger Gotham to explore, a Batmobile to do it in and visuals that make it seem like the Caped Crusader is actually in the room with you.

IN THREE WORDS: The deserved finale



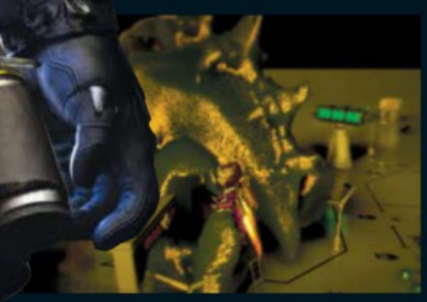
RISE OF THE TOMB RAIDER

In the words of Sterling Archer, 'PHRASING'. Microsoft announced at Gamescom that Lara's next outing would be exclusive to Xbox in 2015, but the statement was quickly pulled to pieces. So yes, you'll be able to play the game on PS4. It might mean waiting a bit, but with the game targeting the same launch window as *Uncharted 4*, were you really thinking of putting Lara before Drake? No.



JOURNEY

With the likes of *Flow*, *Fez* and *Flower* all hitting PS4 a while back, it's a little surprising that it has taken this long for *Journey* to join their ranks. It's more surprising still that it's out next year, but seeing as we're on the eve of some huge games, we can see why Sony might hold this back a bit.



THE TOMORROW CHILDREN

The 'Communist *Minecraft*' vibe given off by Q Games' new offering hasn't sat too well with some people, but the studio insists that its terrifying Tool video take on Sixties Soviet values all falls under parody. It's visually striking, but we're still not even sure exactly what it is – so far, it seems like a community-led *Minecraft* where everything you do is for the good of your 'society'.

IN THE MEANTIME △ **BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY** One of the best action games of the last generation, with strong combat and a huge city to explore.

www.imagineshop.co.uk

FAR CRY 4

ETA: NOVEMBER

We already knew *Far Cry 4* would contain a huge open world set in the fictional Himalayan nation Kyrat, full of mountains, elephants and enemy strongholds to take down. We knew it would feature a heavy focus on the wingsuit as well as a new grappling hook, easing traversal through these more vertical landscapes. What we didn't know until recently was that the game will also feature trips to the magical realm of Shangri-La, full of bright red grass, talking tigers and ancient spectral warriors. Er, what?

Perhaps we shouldn't be too surprised – after all, *Far Cry 3* contained similar jaunts through trippy dream worlds, all fuelled by drugs and sorcery. Still, those sections were pretty small and self-contained, while the Shangri-La bits we've seen so far seem larger and more akin the open-world action of the main game. We aren't saying a huge amount of *Far Cry 4* will take place in this mystical landscape, but it plays at least a significant part of your story.

Otherwise, *Far Cry 4* seems to represent more of the same, which is absolutely fine considering how much we enjoyed *Far Cry 3*. You'll now be able to dick about in the full, open world in co-op mode, and while you'll still have to tackle the main story missions alone, everything else can be tackled with a friend. You'll even be able to share a trial version of the game with friends who don't own it, letting them try it out and play alongside you, a wise marketing move that benefits both Ubisoft and gamers. *Far Cry 3* was one of our favourite FPS games of the last generation, and we can't wait to do it all over again in a bigger, more beautiful world – with a friend by our side.

Most importantly, did we mention that you can ride the elephants?

IN THREE WORDS: Weaponised elephants? Cool

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

YouTube One question, can you hurt your friends in game?, I think a survival game where you fight each other on a huge map would be awesome
awesomedwarfeatsyou

YouTube sooooooooooo copying gta 5_
David zhang

YouTube Loved FC3 and I'm sure they won't disappoint with FC4. The story really grabbed me on the third one, along with level design and the fighting mechanics._
AdamAus85

"YOU'LL NOW BE ABLE TO DICK ABOUT IN THE FULL, OPEN WORLD IN CO-OP MODE"



△○×□ The change in palettes between areas is just ludicrous.







SOMA

ETA: OCTOBER 2015

A new game from the *Amnesia* team, you say? Okay, we'll get back behind the sofa. These guys are on the forefront of the indie horror boom and their next game will be set in an underwater facility gone wrong. If that sounds a bit *BioShock*, then just imagine how much more terrifying it'll be when the game's sole purpose is to scare the crap out of you. Yeah... pretty nasty. It'll be a while before we get to play it (the team's only small, after all) but based on prior form, we're pretty sure it'll be worth the wait.

IN THREE WORDS: New pants, please



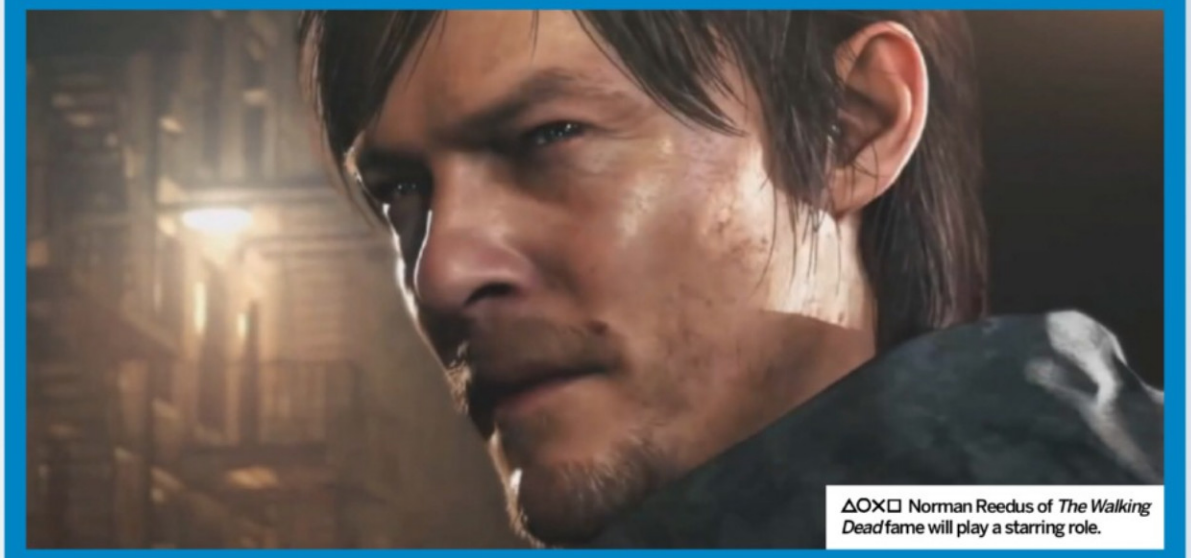
THE EVIL WITHIN

ETA: OCTOBER

It's no great secret that *Resident Evil* stopped being a horror game some time ago, foregoing jump scares and high tension to become a bizarre action game where Chris Redfield punches literally anything he can that get within punching distance of. Leave it to the series' creator Shinji Mikami, then, to right the wrongs of the current survival-horror scene with this old-school horror title in the vein of *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill*'s early output. It's launching around Hallowe'en too, which is obviously perfect timing for something like this. Get involved... if you dare.

IN THREE WORDS: Mikami's horror rebirth

TEAM PICKS



△○×□ Norman Reedus of *The Walking Dead* fame will play a starring role.

SILENT HILLS

ETA: NOVEMBER 2015

Okay, well that was the best announcement ever. I've always loved *Silent Hill*, and Kojima, and horror, so this is more or less my dream game, and the idea of virally announcing it from within another game demo is just a classic slice of Kojima genius. That *PT* demo is the scariest thing I've played since *Amnesia*, but I'm not really sure that the main game – which will be a collaboration between Kojima and director Guillermo Del Toro – will keep the first-person viewpoint. It worked well both here and in parts of *Silent Hill: Shattered Memories*, but Kojima has said previously that he can't play first-person games. Hmmm...

IN THREE WORDS: Best. Reveal. Ever.



△○×□ Don't take your old Move controller to the dump just yet!

UNTIL DAWN

ETA: OCTOBER 2015

Originally announced as a Move game for PS3, *Until Dawn* has been out of the limelight for so long as it's been in the shop being fully refitted to be a shiny new PS4 game instead. It's a weird cross between the kind of campy teen horror movies that Hollywood just can't seem to get enough of and the gameplay decisions and branching narrative of Quantic Dream games like *Beyond* and *Heavy Rain* – characters can die at any point in the story, with these and many other events shaping the way the story twists and turns as your bunch of annoying youngsters attempts to survive the worst night of their lives. Question is, will it still support Move or will the DualShock 4 take over motion control duties?

IN THREE WORDS: *Heavy Rain* horror

IN THE MEANTIME △ **OUTLAST** Kill the lights, shut the curtains and get ready to be terrified – *Outlast* is a horrible experience that we hate to love.

ON YOUR FREE DVD

ALIEN: ISOLATION

ETA: OCTOBER

"ALL ALONG IT HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR THAT, WHILE FIRST-PERSON, THIS IS NOT A SHOOTER, OR AN ACTION GAME"

We knew, in our hearts, but we didn't want to admit it. Yes, in *Alien: Isolation*, you'll be fighting more than just an alien. This has traditionally been the death of past *Aliens* games, forcing you into shootouts with enemy humans rather than the titular monsters you want to see (or don't want to see, as the case may be).

Alien: Isolation is obviously focused around the one enormous Xenomorph constantly stalking you, but you will come into contact with other deranged survivors and murderous androids also.

The reason this doesn't worry us as much as it did in, say, *Colonial Marines*, is the approach The Creative Assembly has taken with *Isolation*. All along it has been made clear that, while first-person, this is not a shooter, or an action game. While you can defend yourself to a limited degree, choosing to stay and fight rather than turn and flee will almost always get you killed. This is why the addition of more humanoid foes isn't necessarily a bad thing – you aren't going to find yourself gunning through hundreds of Weyland-Yutani mercenaries any time soon.

It helps that what we've seen of the new androids are almost as scary as the classic alien, with their bleached skin and relentless, Terminator-like drive to find you and kill you. You will actually be able to kill androids and humans, although it's unlikely to happen often: while you will get a gun at some point, after a few hours with the preview build we only had nine bullets to our name. More useful will be crafted items, thrown together from scrap lying around the ruined space station. Examples include a noise maker, which can distract the alien that constantly hunts for you. The dynamic AI can even work in your favour here – throw the item at a group of human survivors to attract the alien, and enjoy the ensuing gory fireworks.

The biggest worry we have is how TCA will maintain the tension and terror across a full-length game, but initial impressions are still far more positive than any *Alien* game in the last decade. It's remarkable that it's taken us this long, but could we finally have a truly scary *Alien* game?

IN THREE WORDS: Just one alien

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

It looks really boring. I don't want 12 hours hiding in a bin.
@adge_uk

After Colonial Marines I'm going to be very apprehensive.
@JamesFord75

I word meh Ask me again when its out and reviews are on meta critic
@Christabelius

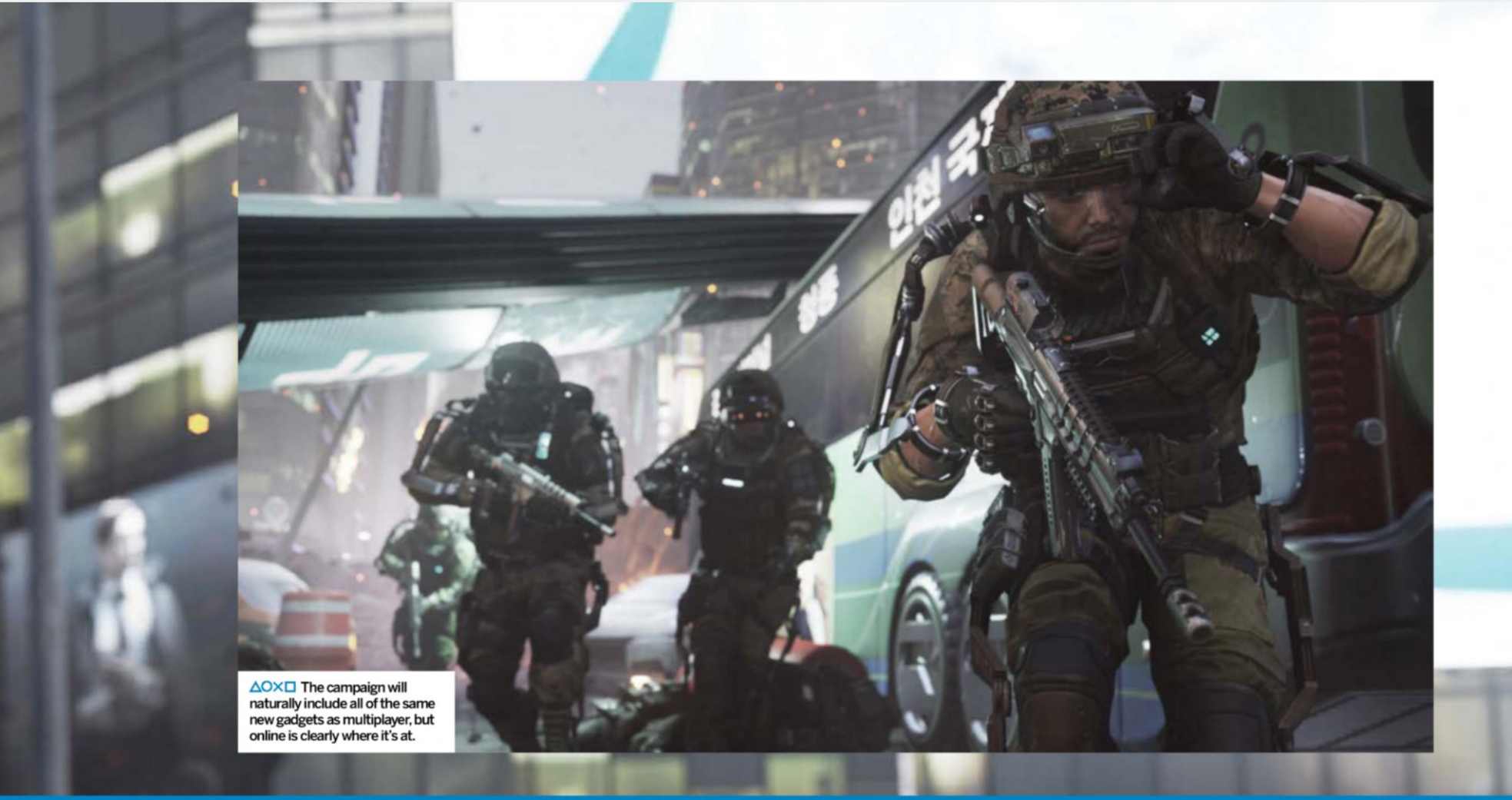






"THE EXOSKELETON IS INTENDED TO INTRODUCE NEW EQUIPMENT, ABILITIES AND MECHANICS"

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△○×□ The campaign will naturally include all of the same new gadgets as multiplayer, but online is clearly where it's at.

ETA 5 NOVEMBER | **DEV** SLEDGEHAMMER GAMES | **PUB** ACTIVISION | **TWITTER** @SHGAMES

Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare

The future of multiplayer is here

PS4 ALSO COMING TO PS3

It's easy to be cynical now, but back in 2007 it's hard to overstate just how big a deal *Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* was. The series was already successful, but *Modern Warfare* blew past records out of the water. It's no exaggeration to say the game revolutionised the FPS genre, but that glory came at a price. As we now know, the influence of *Modern Warfare* has spread far and wide, homogenising the FPS genre and creating an onslaught of similar modern combat games in a style similar to the influx of World War Two FPS titles during the PS2 era. We love *Call Of Duty 4*, but we sort of hate what it did to the genre. Ever since, *Call Of Duty* games themselves have essentially been rehashes, trying to recapture that lightning in a bottle to increasingly minimal success. Interestingly, it's the *COD* titles made by Treyarch that have become more original and interesting than those created by series originators, Infinity Ward.

Now a third developer throws its hat in the ring – Sledgehammer Games. While having only worked on *Modern Warfare 3* in part with Infinity Ward before, the studio has a good pedigree, founded by the two men responsible for the *Dead Space* series. To us, another new studio is good news – while Infinity Ward's games feel increasingly tired, Treyarch has been willing to try new things and add a bit of freshness to the series. Hopefully Sledgehammer can do the same.

Advanced Warfare, if you hadn't guessed from the name, is set in the near future. Technically, *Black Ops II* and *Ghosts* were set in the near future as well, but *Advanced Warfare* is taking things to an even more sci-fi level, mixing classic *COD* gameplay with a heavy dose of *Titanfall* as well as a dash of old-school, *Unreal Tournament/ Quake III Arena* influence.

The biggest and most important element of this new setting is something every player will be equipped with – an Exoskeleton. To quote the hyperbole-laced press release: "you are the advanced soldier." The exoskeleton is intended to introduce new equipment, gameplay abilities and mechanics that will herald huge change to the standard *Call Of Duty* paradigm. You'll be equipped with the Exo Suit in both single and multiplayer, and the new movement options they afford players look like they could be the biggest change to *COD* multiplayer since the original *Modern Warfare*.

Activision has been keen to push 'verticality', and while it is a PR buzzword, it has a point. For the first time, you'll have to look up and down as much as you do back and forward. Not only that, but with the addition of the exoskeleton movements, everything is much faster than *COD* fans might be used to, calling to mind memories of playing *Quake III Arena* on PC back in the day. Boost jumps open up that vaunted vertical space, making higher ground easily reachable. You'll also have boost dodges, delivering enhanced manoeuvrability, and mid-air boost dashes, changing direction and increasing your manoeuvrability while airborne. It leads to tactics like we saw recently in the multiplayer reveal: one player is being chased by another, before jumping up, boosting backwards and landing down behind his hunter, quickly reversing the roles and getting that all-important kill. Mid-air movement is a totally new concept in *Call Of Duty*, again taking us back to older, less realistic arena shooters. We are reminded slightly of the criminally underrated *Tribes* games too, an FPS series with a large focus on jetpacks.

Finally, from the air you'll be able to perform a 'boost slam', an air-to-ground attack that will pummel whichever poor sod is underneath you. It's an awesome move that makes you feel like a badass, and exemplifies just how important controlling the air will be.

Along with the jetpack, your Exo Suit has a number of other enhancements to make you

HAPPY MAPPING

Four maps have been revealed so far, and we have the rundown



ASCEND

Taking place in a Space Elevator terminal, this location features a score streak that allows players to call in the turret defenses. It's a cool map-specific feature.



BIOLAB

Part of a secret base, this map features both close-quarters indoor combat along with outdoor terrain. Using the boost features of your suit should be interesting.



DEFENDER

In the shadow of the Golden Gate Bridge, Defender features a dynamic event – a tsunami that hits regularly and changes a good portion of the map.



RIOT

This penitentiary still has some defence mechanisms active. This map offers two large open areas on both sides along with a large cell block right in the centre.

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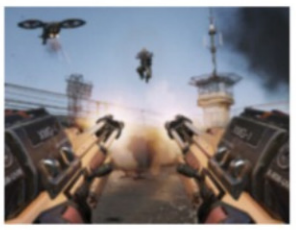
even better at teabagging people online. You'll choose these when customising your character, something that Sledgehammer is promising is more in-depth than ever. For the first time, you'll actually collect loot in the form of Supply Drops, with more than 1,000 rewards to collect in multiplayer. Supply Drops reward you with items, including custom weapons, character gear and reinforcements. To add to the MMO loot feel, these rewards come in three rarities – Enlisted, Professional, and Elite. You'll earn these Supply Drops when ranking up, as well as having them rewarded through play time and in-game challenges. It feels similar to *Destiny*, mixing a multiplayer FPS with an MMO item system, and presents the same challenges of how difficult it will be to balance. If everyone else has better stuff than you, playing against them will be both irritating and essentially useless. Of course, the easiest solution to this is to have every new weapon option be exactly that: a different option, rather than a clearly better one. Balancing in *COD* is beyond important, so we are sure Sledgehammer is paying a lot of attention to it.

Sledgehammer is also claiming players have unprecedented options to find the weapon that best suits their needs. Each weapon features ten custom options, where cosmetics and attributes vary, which will ultimately deliver nearly 350 unique weapons. On top that, each weapon will have attachment options, including classic ones that will feel familiar, as well as all-new ones playing with the sci-fi theme.

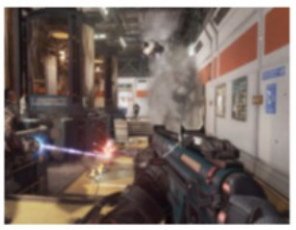
"EACH WEAPON FEATURES TEN DIFFERENT CUSTOM OPTIONS"

There will also be a whole new class of gun: Directed Energy weapons. The new Heavy Weapons class includes the imaginatively named EM1 and EMPm2. These new guns use the power of weaponised energy to kill foes – essentially, *laser beams*. They don't have ammo, but will instead overheat with too much use. It sounds crazy, but these guns are apparently based on currently existing technology, so more fool us. You'll need to keep the weapon focused on the enemy while it charges, which sounds like it could be more difficulty than it's worth – time will tell.

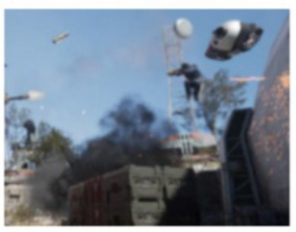
△○×□ **The shield Exo option will come into its own in team-based modes, allowing a pointman to protect their team as they approach an objective.**



△○×□ **While powerful, turrets like this leave you open to attack.**



△○×□ **Chemical containers can be blown up for free damage.**



△○×□ **Keep your eye on the sky at all times – enemies are everywhere!**

The Pick 10 create-a-class format is back with even more options than before: it's now Pick 13. You can now choose which scorestreaks will be included with your class – yet more choice in what was already a pretty robust class creation system. You can also customise the scorestreaks themselves to make them more powerful, for a cost. For example, you'll be able to turn a standard Remote Turret into a Rocket Turret Module, which is clearly better just from how cool it sounds.

Advanced Warfare is also introducing co-op scorestreaks, in case you just couldn't get enough streaking of scores by yourself. The aim is to open up the streaks to players who don't necessarily excel on their own, and as such may not always get the chance to experience the high-end scorestreaks. By working together with a friend or teammate and doing well, you'll get another way to call in a giant bloody helicopter or whatever you've chosen and annoy the hell out of the enemy team for 20-odd seconds.

Your extra Exo Suit abilities (not including the movement options, which come as standard) will be chosen within the Pick 13 class creation. These are activated by the player during the match, lasting until the battery power is

spent and must recharge. You'll have a bunch of different options, including a shield attached to your arm, increased footspeed, temporary increased health regeneration, a cloaking device, hovering in the air and more. Each ability will take a slot in Pick 13, so you can't have everything all the time, and choosing which powers you roll out with will determine exactly how you play. It's an interesting choice to make, and we welcome the opportunity for more in-depth character specialisation, as well as the chance to use a boatload of awesome robot suit powers.

"NEW PERKS IMPACT EXO ABILITIES, SUCH AS ONE THAT SUPPRESSES BOOST SO IT MAKES LESS NOISE"

A slate of new perks impact Exo abilities, such as one that suppresses boost so it makes less noise if you favour a stealthy approach. Another is the Gung-Ho perk, which allows players to reload while sprinting, and shoot while sliding. There's also Exo Overcharge, which gives players more energy for their Exo battery. Exo Perks again take up slots, so think carefully about which you really need.

An all-new feature, and a first for *Call Of Duty*, is the Virtual Firing Range. From the Create-A-Class menu or between matches, players can hit the Virtual Firing Range to try out a new gun. It's a cool idea that reminds us of playing training mode in *Street Fighter IV* while we wait for an online match. Being able to test out a new weapon and get an immediate feel for things like the sights, attachments, bullet spread and recoil before the next match even starts will be a big help to the real hardcore players that pay close attention to the minute details between each weapon. It's a small addition, but one of the ideas we like the most, showing simple but effective forward thinking.

As well as the classic modes you expect (Team Deathmatch, Capture The Flag and so on) two new ones have been revealed: Uplink and Momentum. Uplink has been built with teamwork in mind, and to promote fast and frantic gameplay. Both teams fight for control of a satellite drone, and must race – with it in hand – to the opponent's uplink. It sounds like a variation of Capture The Flag, so it will be interesting to see how Sledgehammer differentiates the two.

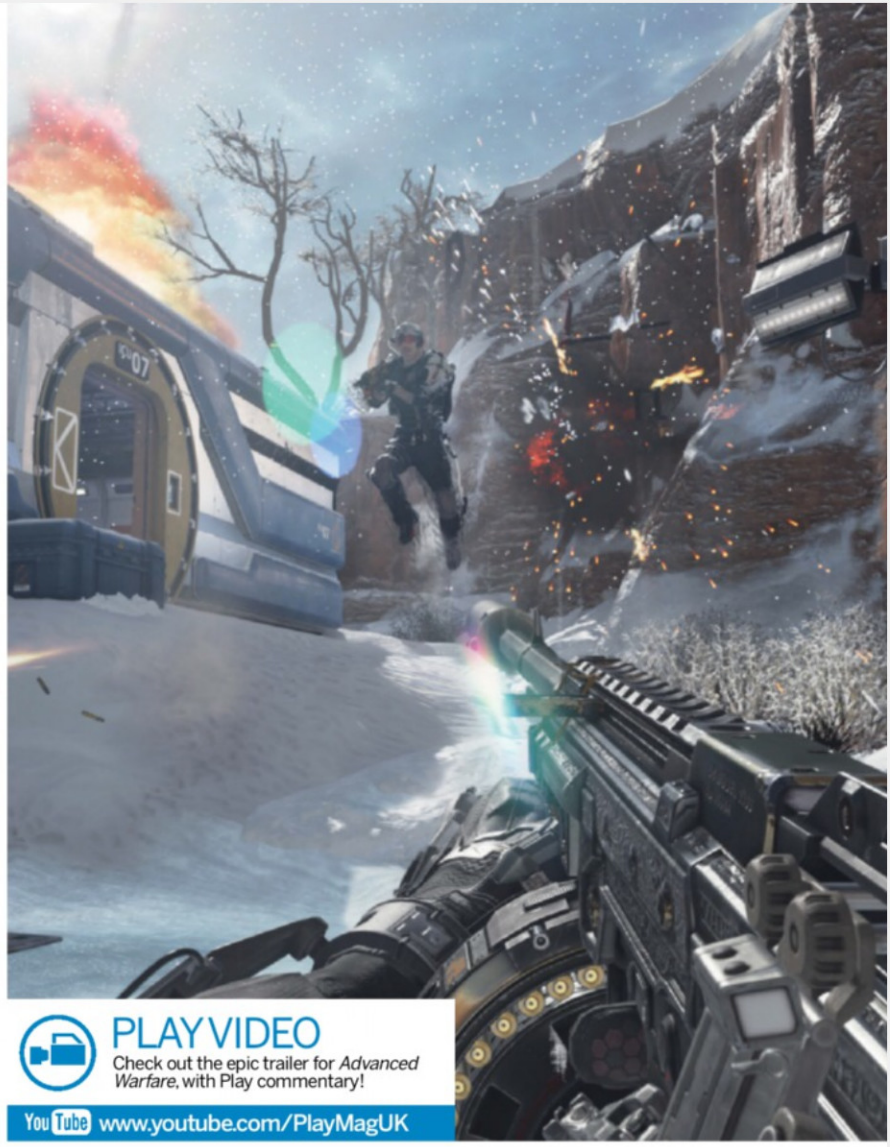
Momentum is based on the War game mode originally found in *World At War*. Essentially the *Call Of Duty* version of tug of war, five consecutive capture points exist on the map, but only one will be active at a time. The more kills and captures your team gets, the faster you are able to capture additional points. Once the other team captures yours, the momentum meter gets reset, so your team needs to be at its best the whole game. It's a cool take on the back-and-forth multiplayer FPS dynamic, and sounds like it could become one of our favourite game types.

There are also multiple additions to the aesthetic character customisation, with more options than ever to make yourself look like a prime grade dudebro douche. Hopefully *Advanced Warfare* won't feature the same awful marijuana skins DLC beloved by pre-pubescent 12-year-olds who are far, far better than you will ever be. Sledgehammer is also touting improvements to the multiplayer lobby as a big deal, but nobody much cares about such things – if you play *Call Of Duty* every day, you only care about how it plays.

That's the big question about *Advanced Warfare*. With the amount of small but significant changes it is making to the formula, will the *Call Of Duty* diehard recognise and approve of this new, sci-fi vision of the game they know and love? Of course, you can never underestimate the power of a brand – millions will buy the game regardless of the content or anything else. But with the winds of change apparently starting to finally blow, public opinion is slowly turning on *COD. Ghosts* still sold millions but was clearly not as well received as past titles. Will the fanbase be receptive to the changes *Advanced Warfare* presents?

That all depends on how well implemented they are, and from what we've seen so far, there is little cause to worry. Sledgehammer may be a young studio but it has experienced staff with knowledge of how to make action games. With the promise that *Advanced Warfare* will appeal to existing fans, new players and lapsed gamers who might have fallen out of love with the franchise, the game has a lot to live up to. This is the most excited we've been for a *Call Of Duty* game in years, as it looks the furthest from the stagnant *COD* template of the last few years. There's a lesson here: adding jetpacks to something makes it infinitely better. Learn this well.

Sam Smith



PLAY VIDEO
Check out the epic trailer for *Advanced Warfare*, with Play commentary!
YouTube www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK



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MAN, MACHINE, THE FUTURE

Just what can the new Exo Suit do?

THRUSTERS

As well as the main booster on the bottom of the backpack device, there are smaller thrusters on either side. These let you perform quick strafing leaps, perfect for making snipers lose their bead on you or entering a new room or corridor with the element of surprise on your side. We get an *Unreal Tournament* vibe from this; obviously a good thing as Epic's classic arena shooter was ace.

OPTICAL CAMO

While the Exo Suit's mobility options are common across all variants, some of its more situational powers must be chosen by players before a match begins. Among the more useful is this pure stealth option, letting snipers disappear from sight for a limited time to relocate more easily after a kill or buying you time to cheat death. It's not unlimited though – the battery only lasts a few moments.

MELEE POWER

A single melee strike has always been all it takes to score a kill in *COD*, which doesn't make all that much sense – a glancing knife slash to the leg is unlikely to end your life, after all. But when your arms are reinforced by a metal exoskeleton and you hit like a truck, we have no trouble believing it. By combining this with the boosters, you can also execute a powerful ground slam attack.

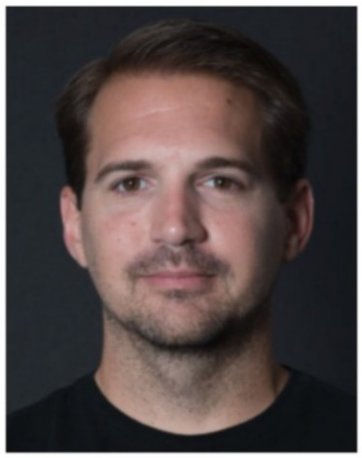


BOOSTERS

Rear-mounted jets allow for all kinds of new mobility options, from the boost jump (for reaching all-new heights) to the boost slide, allowing you to quickly reach cover or close distance for a cheeky shotgun kill. Activision kept banging on about verticality during the game's multiplayer reveal and it's not hard to see why – this feature of the Exo Suit is a game-changer for multiplayer.

RIOT SHIELD

Another optional extra, the Exo's battery can also be used to create a shield that unfolds from the arm unit. Clever use of this can make opponents waste their remaining clip, allowing you effectively a free kill as you pack up your shield and unload into them for no reply. Just be sure to keep an eye on battery levels, as failing to pop a shield when you need it will get you killed.



INTERVIEW

Greg Reisdorf

Lead multiplayer designer, Sledgehammer Games

What do you think of the reaction of the fans coming off the multiplayer reveal?
Well, it's been amazing. We couldn't have hoped for better, for a better response from our fans and everything. We're getting tons of positive feedback from everyone that's played the game, from casuals to the eSports community. It's been great.

Do you feel any pressure taking on such a huge franchise?
Oh yeah, there's tons of pressure! Even taking it on and for it to be Sledgehammer's first lead project, the pressure's been in our minds from the very beginning. And really, it's helped motivate us in quite a lot of ways to really innovate and bring something new to the table that we can be proud of. We can put our own stamp on the game and bring something really special for the fans.

We're getting a slightly old-school arena shooter vibe to it. Are you looking back to those old bunny hop-style games?
I think it's great that people have that kind of nostalgic take on it, as they see what we've created, but it was never really the intent to bring that. The intent has really been to innovate *Call Of Duty.* Really, that started with focusing on what the core of the game was. We were like 'Well, the game is all about gun skill, it's all about gun-on-gun combat', and everything we do and all of the decisions we've made around the Exo and the Exo's movement all push back into that goal. That is all about saying 'hey, that boost jump, how does that influence combat? How does that influence gunplay?' It just evolved from there over time. The ultimate product that we've come to is the game as it stands today.

After playing the game, it's clear that it's faster than ever. Is it a bit of a struggle finding the right pacing?
Well, there's always balancing that goes on with everything we do. We take it very seriously; when we add something into the game, we make sure that it fits with everything else in the game. We have a lot of components and they're all interacting with each other. So we can focus on that, we have dedicated guys, and all they do is focus on balancing the game. They check the data versus the player feedback, and all that. So it's a challenge, but we're on top of it.

Do you think that the hardcore players are going to feel familiar enough with *Advanced Warfare* to slip back into it?
Oh, they're going to fit back in, no problem! So, first and foremost, it feels like a *Call Of Duty* game.

"THESE DIRECTED ENERGY WEAPONS ARE A LOT HEAVIER. THEY'RE BIGGER, THEY'RE BULKIER"

When you get your hands on the sticks, you can play the same way as before, and nothing has changed in that sense. But then, you do have the added Exo movement that you can do without learning at all. You can just pick it up; it's got such intuitive controls. But to really take it to the next level, those hardcore players who really want to learn and get into it can build those skills with the Exo movement, and really take their gun skills with those Exo movements to a brand new place.



Can you explain exactly kind of advantages the new energy weapons will have?
Well, these directed energy weapons are a lot heavier. They're bigger, they're bulkier. They slow down player movement, but what they do offer is their unlimited ammo. They don't have an ammo supply, but they do have a battery that overheats. If you're able to burst fire it, you can be really accurate with that, and by burst-firing you'll be able to keep that heat down. It's pretty great for sustained fire, and long-range suppression. It's for getting across the map and really laying it down, taking out a couple of enemies, a group of enemies at the same time in an area. It's for controlling an area and locking down a space.

You're adding Supply Drops as well. What was the inspiration behind this system?
Well, that system again started with thinking about the beginning of the game cycle, three years ago, really looking at the game and going 'What can we take? What can we expand on? ' For example, we've had title cards in the game for a very long time. Everybody loves getting title cards. So we asked ourselves, what would happen if we took that and made it something you could use in-game? We started looking at the weapons and asking 'how can we balance and tune all these weapons and be able to have enough where we can wheel them out to the player and give them a functional reward?' And that led into the idea of gear, and that led into the lobby, and then *that* led into the virtual firing range. There were a lot of things that spawned from that.

This is the first *COD* in some time to have a three-year development cycle. So how has that benefited you guys?
Well, there are a lot of functions and features that normally wouldn't have shown up, like the virtual



firing range and the lobby. To be able to have the time be able to tune the mechanics and make sure they're all fluid and they all work together and they all balance. There's just been a ton of stuff there.

You're also adding these new co-op Scorestreaks. Do you mind elaborating on how these will work?

The co-op scorestreaks are basically when there's a player who earns the scorestreak, and any other player on their team can join that Scorestreak by pressing and holding a button. They'll pull out a tablet, a little bar will charge, and they'll join the Scorestreak in a defence or support capacity.

On a personal level, what have you enjoyed the most about developing the game?

The Exo movement is pretty exciting to see, just being able to chain all the movements and still having it so I haven't learned everything yet. I still see people pulling off crazy moves. We've been playing with it a lot. We had some of the mechanics only two months into development, so it's been some time, and yet I'm still seeing people doing new things with those mechanics.

Is it fun to see people coming up with techniques in the game that you never expected or never thought of?

I saw a guy boost jump into a boost slide into a boost dodge, ran into cover, then came out of cover with this shield that he popped, and then he slammed down onto the ground and killed a guy. It's just... even if you're the guy on the receiving end of that, if you watch that killcam, it's just fun to watch. You're like 'wow, you know what? That guy took me out, but that's awesome and I want to do that. I want to go experiment and try.'

ETA Q1 2015 | **DEV** FROM SOFTWARE/JAPAN STUDIO | **PUB** SONY | **TWITTER** @HIDETAKAMIYAZAK

Bloodborne

It's Dark Souls on PS4. Get your wallet out already...

THERE'S A GOOD reason for From Software's new hardcore action-RPG not actually having 'Souls' in its title: you don't actually collect souls. While it looks and to an extent plays so similarly to the trio of brilliant PS3 games, this one crucial difference is huge and throws up all kinds of questions about the RPG side of the game, none of which From Software seems ready to answer just yet. Will there be any kind of leveling system beyond upgrading your gear? Perhaps experience will be rewarded on completion of an objective rather than on every kill as is typical? We could guess all day long and then some but truth be told, we won't know how deep *Bloodborne*'s RPG vein runs until From wants us to. And that's fine. Because right now, we're still reeling from getting our arses kicked by the bastard-hard thing in a completely different environment to the sword-and-board setup we know so well.

Bloodborne is a significantly quicker and slicker game than its *Souls* predecessors, and that takes some adjustment. Familiar HUD elements, controls and gameplay motifs reek of *Souls*, often making it easy to slip back into old patterns, only for your heart to sink as you realise all too late that you don't actually *have* a shield to hide behind or a Pyromancy Flame to fall back on when things get rough. This is a game with a far more deliberate sense of pace and urgency about it, and the new and refined mechanics reflect this perfectly. While locked onto an enemy, the dodge move is worlds away from the meaty roll of the *Souls* games – more like *Virtua Fighter 5*'s Offensive Move technique, it's a long sweeping slide that takes you pretty much behind your attacker and leaves you in a pretty good place to punish their attacks. The *Souls* backstep returns as well, again benefiting from better range and pace as spacing and mobility seem to be as crucial here as they are in *Souls* PvP.

Perhaps the most significant change of the lot, though, is the way the health system works. There are still healing items for use in a pinch, but you're able to recover without even touching them if you're skilled enough thanks to one of the best risk/reward mechanics we've encountered in a long time. Whenever you take damage, you'll notice that the main health bar plummets but leaves behind a residual secondary bar – this decreases in size over time but can be gradually replenished by landing strikes of your own before it's all gone. While it doesn't make any logical sense, it's a brilliant gameplay concept and one that really requires restraint and smart judgement to fully exploit. Dive straight in for a counter attack and you'll likely take more damage than you heal, meaning you have to quickly find or force a



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WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Fast, flowing action combat that makes the *Souls* games look pedestrian.
- A grim gothic setting to explore for as long as your nerves will allow.
- Dual-form weapons offer versatility and some awesome-looking combos.
- Mechanically, it's still really similar to the excellent *Souls* games.

safe opening while watching your life tick down. We've already seen it drive players to make hasty mistakes and pay the ultimate price, so finding a balance here looks to be among the most critical skills to learn.

Coming from pure melee *Souls* backgrounds, we're probably in better stead than some to adjust to these changes – the many casters of the *Souls* world (and the handful of bow users) might be in for a bit of a shock, however, considering that the only ranged options revealed so far are the guns, themselves demoted to secondary weapons. There's none of the fire-and-forget bullshit of some of the *Souls* series' spells here either, most firearms so weak that they're useful purely for well-timed interrupts of enemy blows or perhaps the odd cheeky finishing blow or execution. But even then, limited ammunition prevents them from being overly exploitable outside of an endgame where you can grind for ammo – you really seem to need to make very shot count, as a perfect interrupt opens up an enemy for a free critical hit. The blunderbuss operates a little differently and does actually have the expected kick and damage output behind it, but ammo is even scarcer. Rely on this bad boy and you'll be dead the second the buckshot runs dry.

In fact, seeing a tossed pebble do only slightly less damage than a pistol shot tells you exactly what you need to know about *Bloodborne* – it's a game where the chief focus is on great melee combat. Despite the fact that the controller setup and a lot of the animations might suggest



△○×□ Never trust anything behind a grate or door – you just know it's gonna burst out.

otherwise, a lot has changed here as well. It would appear that every weapon has two forms, one with shorter range and quick attacks while an extended version adds to both damage and swing time. It reminds us of the Switch Axe in *Monster Hunter*, only with the same mechanic seemingly applying to all (or at least most) melee weapons, plus you can even switch styles mid-combo to unleash a powerful special 'transformation' attack and earn additional kudos from anyone watching at the time for doing something that is not only practical but looks damn cool as well. Speaking of which, the animations for these weapon transformations are beautiful – there's a great moment in the



PRIOR FORM

DARK SOULS While a secondary team at From was working on *Dark Souls II*, the team behind the original game was hard at work on this PS4 exclusive. Praise the sun!



"BIG BADS IN BLOODBORNE MAY NOT ALWAYS BE WAITING BEHIND A FOG GATE FOR YOU TO AGREE TO DUEL THEM"



△○×□ Light? Light!? Get that rubbish the hell out of here.



trailer where a curved blade is deftly attached to a holstered pole to create a brutal scythe when some tough enemies appear, and that's everything that's awesome about this mechanic summed up in one GIF-friendly moment.

Going back to *Monster Hunter* for a moment, there's always been some crossover between skill sets for players of the Capcom games and the *Souls* series, from learning where your invulnerable frames are on dodge rolls to knowing when *not* to attack. The latter is among the hardest things to get your head around – like that moment when you realise how important the ability to smartly fold is to a solid poker game – but we'd point all prospective *Bloodborne* players in the direction of *Monster Hunter Freedom Unite* on PSP (it runs on Vita, and is cheap, and incredible) as a kind of boot camp for what's to come. It's a piecemeal experience in comparison but having learned our skills fighting Rathian and Diablos, this dragon-bashing crash course comes highly recommended. Just don't play bow or bowgun, else you're kinda missing the point.

Part of the reason for that recruitment drive for a decade-old PSP game is that your big bads in *Bloodborne* may not always be waiting behind a fog gate for you to agree to duel them. Apparently, some of them will be able to just ambush you at their leisure, meaning there's no amount of arena learning or trial-and-error formulation that can help you. You just have to be good at the game. It's hard to tell from our clearly scripted demo just how much this will actually happen, mind, but it's best to be prepared.

The hulking lopsided freak we faced off against also presented perhaps another change to the *Souls* formula – regular attacks did little damage but opportunities came up to land powerful criticals, which could be something unique to this particular encounter or a sign of a game-wide shift towards more 'traditional' boss battles where exploiting a moment of weakness can lead to massive damage. It's always sort of been the way, but it just feels more pronounced here. Based on the one boss we've seen. Of what will likely end up being 30-odd bosses, if prior form is anything to go by. It's tough to tell if we can actually read anything into this or whether From simply chose to show off one of the bosses that was most removed from traditional *Souls* showdowns.

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SHARE THIS



△○×□ Ready to show the world your best kills?

BRUTALITY

PS4: The best place to slay

We love watching videos of great parries and tight duels in the *Souls* games, so we're looking forward to seeing what skilled players will be able to do with *Bloodborne*'s slicker mechanics. We've already seen some stunning moments, so make sure you're ready to hit the Share button as you explore Yharnam.

△○×□ This giant... *thing* is the one boss we've tackled so far. It takes a beating, but contextual critical hits do crazy damage.

Most exciting of all, though, is the revelation that *Bloodborne* is due to launch in the next six months. It's safe to place it at the end of this timeframe, so February or March (just in time for the end of the financial year) and it doesn't seem beyond the realms of possibility – aside from a little frame rate tweaking and polish, the game already looks and feels at least as complete as any of From's other releases. With the *Dark Souls II* DLC about to wrap up, we get a little bit of time away from the horror of From Software before *Bloodborne* invites us back. And while we're terrified to take its clawed, diseased hand and let it lead us into a new era of gaming masochism, we're obviously going to and we're obviously going to love it. We're gluttons for punishment, and From Software doesn't even have a safety word. Bring it.

Luke Albigés

BLOODBORNE is being developed by From Software. Check the website for more details:
www.playstation.com/en-us/games/bloodborne-ps4

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Sailing returns. Who'd have though sailing would be the franchise's highlight?
- You get to play as a Templar and kill the boring Assassins.
- It should link up the stories of the last two games.
- It's an inclusive move for those who have yet to make the jump to PS4.

△○×□ Quite how we'll get from New York to the north Atlantic we aren't sure, but who cares when it looks this good?

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ETA 11 NOVEMBER | **DEV** UBISOFT SOFIA | **PUB** UBISOFT | **TWITTER** @ASSASSINSCREED

Assassin's Creed: Rogue

I'm (still) on a boat

PS3

IN AN ERA where so many games are straddling the generation gap and releasing on both PS3 and PS4, Ubisoft's approach with the *Assassin's Creed* series is an interesting one. Rather than releasing a pared-down version of *Unity*, the game coming to PS4 and Xbox One this winter, the PS3 and Xbox 360 will instead get an entirely different game: *Assassin's Creed: Rogue*.

It's a decision we approve of, one that benefits gamers on every console. *Unity*'s developers don't have to worry about making things work on less powerful hardware and similarly, those making *Rogue* can focus on their platforms of choice without having to force a next-gen feel. *Rogue* won't look as good as *Unity* – that's just a fact. If you can accept that though, it might just be the more exciting game.

It's well known that after the poor *Assassin's Creed III*, *ACIV: Black Flag* turned things around thanks to the focus on excellent naval combat and the general awesome feeling of being a pirate. It was questionable, then, that *Unity* seemed to be ditching all this, but now we know why. The naval focus of *Black Flag* will continue in *Rogue*, and while we question why it's the last-generation game they've chosen to do it in (our guess: re-using assets to ease development), more sailing is a good thing regardless of which console it is on.

Rogue will take place in 1754, bridging the gap between *Black Flag* and *Assassin's Creed III* and rounding off the story of those three games. Set around North America and the Arctic region, you'll control Assassin-turned-Templar Shay Patrick Cormac – that's right, you play as a bad guy, hunting down Assassins. Does it make us bad people that we find this way more appealing? Shay will begin the game as an Assassin but switch over to the dark side during the story. We don't know much more of the story, but we do know it will tie into the lives of Black Flag hero Edward Kenway and his son Haytham (and his son, Connor). Do you care? Nah, us neither, and we really, really hope Ubisoft finally packs it in with the rubbish modern-day stuff.

We know of three areas that will be in the game so far: New York City, the Appalachian River Valley and the North Atlantic Ocean, where you'll be doing your sailing. Your ship will be called the Morrigan (no relation to the *Darkstalkers* succubus) and will be smaller than *Black Flag*'s Jackdaw to ease navigation through the iceberg-filled waters. These icebergs will damage you if you hit them (duh) but can also be used as cover from enemy cannon fire, or destroyed to create waves that can hinder other ships. You'll also occasionally find your ship being boarded by Assassins baying for your blood and be forced to fight them off to save yourself, your ship and your crew.

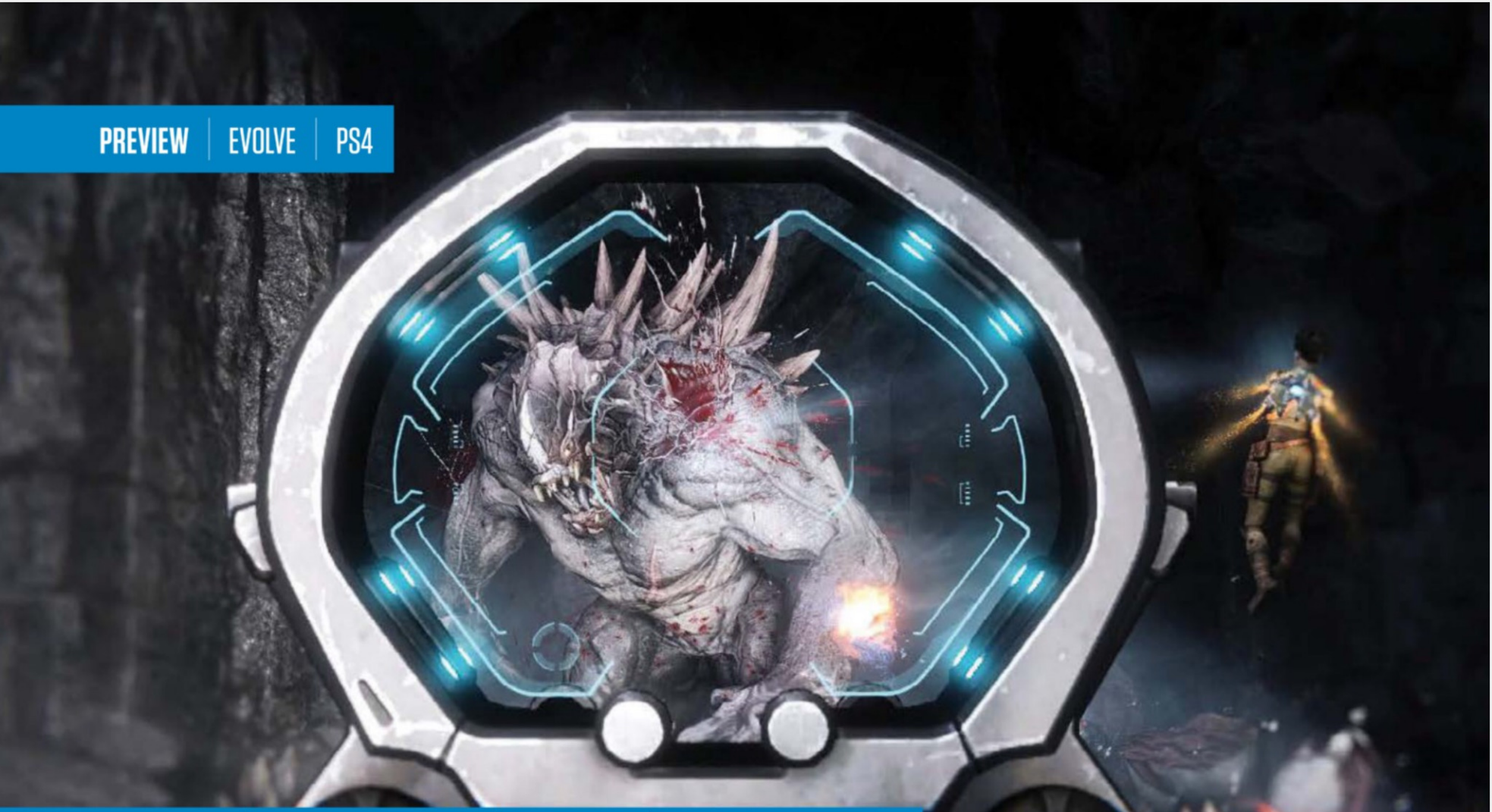
Otherwise, things seem much the same, and this isn't a surprise. If Ubisoft is planning any big changes, it will save them for *Unity*, the current-gen game that everyone's attention is going to be on. *Rogue* is, for lack of a better term, a stopgap, something to satisfy gamers who are yet to make the jump to PS4 but simply have to have their *AC* fix this year.

In that respect, it's a shame that the brilliant sailing of *Black Flag* has been relegated to the last-gen systems when we really want to see it take centre-stage in the franchise going forward. The dream is still a spin-off 'Pirate's Creed' series that would inevitably become bigger and better than *Assassin's Creed* because *it's about pirates*, but for now we'll just have to make do. *Rogue* looks, in many ways, more interesting than *Unity*, and part of us wishes the platforms for the two were switched.

Sam Smith

ASSASSIN'S CREED ROGUE is being developed by Ubisoft Sofia. Visit the website for more details: **assassinscreed.ubi.com**





ETA FEBRUARY 2015 | **DEV** TURTLE ROCK STUDIOS | **PUB** 2K GAMES | **TWITTER** @EVOLVEGAME

Evolve

Turtle Rock Studios unleashes the Kraken (and four new Hunters)

PS4

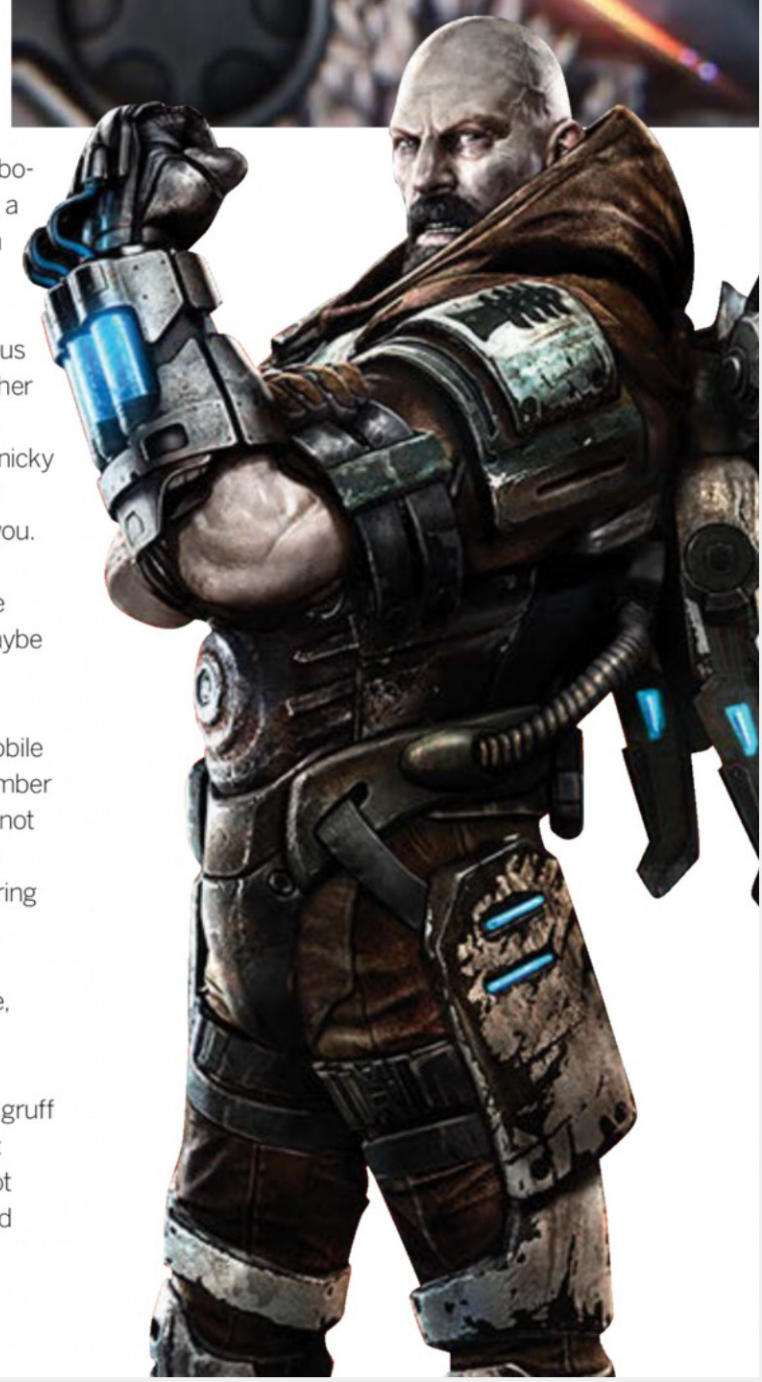
RETURNING TO EVOLVE is like going back to summer camp. There are loads of trees, for one thing, and attacking the wildlife is discouraged. But more pertinently, our recent hands-on with the game's new build had that same weird feeling of being more of the same, just not *quite* as you remember it. In *Evolve*, that's down to the four new spins on its Hunter classes and a gangly, lightning-zapping Kraken monster. At summer camp, it was when they closed the sweet shop because one of the campers was deathly allergic to peanuts. Both things were still familiar in sum, but key ingredients had been mixed up and called for some challenging adaptation.

When we come to play *Evolve* for this second time, we're limited once again in our choice of classes and maps. The four new Hunters – Hyde, the Assault; Maggie, the Trapper; Lazarus, the Medic and Bucket, the clanking Claptrap-a-like Support character with a synthesised British accent and a detachable flying head – replace the four human characters we'd barely gotten to know on our first tour of the planet Shear back in February. Fortunately, each new character fills a familiar role, which means that even with a monstrous new enemy and an unfamiliar team, we managed to muscle our way through five rounds while only being ripped to ribbons once. Go Team Meatsack.

We start, obviously, with the RP-spouting robo-soldier. Perfect diction aside, he's also packing a Guided Missile Launcher as a primary weapon – which neatly compensates for the slight fiddliness in hitting fleeing monsters at long range – and the same Cloaking Field as previous Support character, Hank. This can be used either to render nearby Hunters invisible for a tricksy sneak attack, or (in less expert hands) as a panicky last resort for when you poke the monster too many times with a boomstick and it turns on you.

Best of all, though, are Bucket's deployable Sentry Guns. These replace Hank's long-range shield gun and are – for Hunter teams that maybe aren't working as well together as they should be – a much simpler tool for players to get a handle on. Chucking out all four of these immobile weapons platforms effectively doubles the number of guns on the Hunter team, and while they're not much use during the actual *hunting* bits of the game, piling them all into a confined space during a showdown with a monster made for reliable, hassle-free extra damage.

Speaking of hassle-free extra damage, Hyde, the new Assault class, is even more of a blunt murder instrument than the previous group's Markov. There's not a lot of nuance to Hyde (a gruff cockney, Dick Van Dyke to Bucket's Downton): for medium-to-long range bullet-drilling he's got a minigun, good for hosing down monsters and





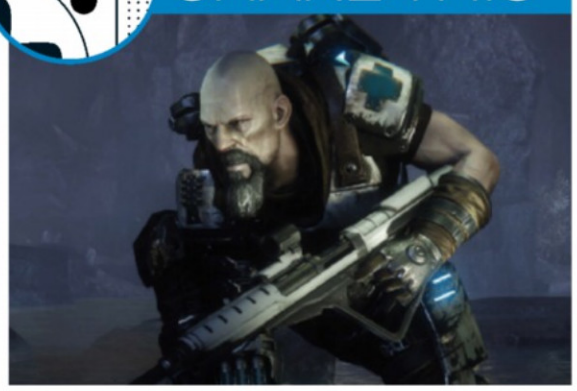
△○×□ Once we started grilling things with Hyde's flamethrower, all pretense of teamwork went out the airlock. What's that? The Medic's trapped in a carnivorous plant? Pfft. Busy.



"EVEN WITH A MONSTROUS NEW ENEMY AND AN UNFAMILIAR TEAM, WE MANAGED FIVE ROUNDS WHILE ONLY BEING RIPPED TO RIBBONS ONCE"

SHARE

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PROTECT THE GENERATOR

"What do you mean they cut the power?!"

If you don't manage to bring down the beast before it reaches its third stage of evolution, the game will force you into a showdown, giving the Monster player a countdown to destroy a power generator somewhere on the map. For the Hunters, that means trapping out the room like the climax of *Aliens*: harpoon traps, mines, sentry guns... Anything you can throw down that might stumble the raging creature bearing down upon you.

uppity alien wildlife; for more personal encounters he packs a flamethrower, which does ludicrous damage at the cost of your having to run about right under the monster's feet. If your team are all bickering in different languages or jetting off on their lonesomes, Hyde's your least flimsy chance of making it through a round un-eaten.

If your team's playing together nicely, however, then new Trapper Maggie is the most interesting addition to the roster of scowling nature botherers. While she lacks the Harpoon Gun that previous Trapper Griffin could use to snare the monster in place, Maggie makes up for it with her pet, Daisy – a jowly alien tooth-monster the size of a baby rhino.

Despite her formidable size and spiked plumage, Daisy isn't actually a much of a scrapper. Instead, she's the alien equivalent of a bloodhound – galloping off way ahead of the comparatively bumbling Hunters on the monster's trail. The monster normally leaves glowing blue tracks on the floor of Evolve's battlegrounds, but tricksy alien players can turn the Hunters' reliance on these into a weapon: climbing up tall rocks and changing direction, for instance, or using the monster's sneak ability to creep about without leaving a trail. It's hard to tell from a couple of hours play-time, but these sorts of craven tactics don't seem to faze Maggie's domesticated alien pet one bit.

Which leaves Lazarus, the Medic. One thing that's going to be critical to *Evolve*'s success is that all the classes are as fun to play as each other – if there's one character that makes players quit out of lobbies for another roll of the dice, then the whole premise starts to unravel. For us, Lazarus was that weak link. Both Medics in *Evolve* actually fill two roles: on the one hand, they're there to keep the rest of the team from getting diced into chunks; on the other, they're there to make the monster weaker with their Sniper Rifles. Evolve's Sniper Rifles aren't your slow-firing, standard FPS slug-throwers; rather, they blast weak points into the monsters' chitinous armour plates, into which other players can then cram bullets for extra damage. Long-ranged meat tenderisers, if you will.

When *Evolve*'s Medics rocked up at the armoury to receive their arsenals, Lazarus was clearly first in line. Maybe the passing of time has dulled out memories of Val's loadout, but Lazarus' rifle feels like it fires faster, painting more vulnerabilities on the beast for teammates to blast with ordnance. But his other abilities feel a bit sub-par. Lazarus's dual healing abilities are the Lazarus Device (which can return dead Hunters to life without waiting on the two-minute respawn timer) and the Healing Burst, an area-of-effect heal that patches up nearby squaddies. In a straight scrap with the



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- *Evolve*'s Hunters aren't interchangeable soldier-gruffs with assault weapons.
- The Hunters' abilities all fit together well, allowing for comprehensive co-op play.
- Against a fully-evolved monster, all four characters need to work together.
- The Kraken is an ethereal delight to play as.

IAIN WILLOWS

Q&A

International producer, 2K Games



How have you made sure each monster is equally dangerous on each battlefield?

The good thing about the monsters is that they have their own weaknesses and advantages. In the first map, there were a lot of open areas – lots of rocks and things – and we learned where the good areas to trap the Goliath were. [As the monster] you could use the level's height and lead [the Hunters] on a merry chase. In the caverns of the new map, there are good places to trap the monster and there are bad places. You don't want to get stuck in a very confined space with a Goliath. But taking that height advantage away from the Kraken is a very good thing to do. A Stage 3 Kraken, probably not, but the choice is there.

Do you personally prefer one monster or Hunter class over the others?

The Kraken is my new favourite. I used to be very much a Hank player. It was my thing. But now that Maggie has come along, I feel like I can control games very well. I know what it's like playing as the monster and getting caught by the Harpoon Traps, and I can feel [monster players'] frustration as I'm putting those down.

Give us some insider strategies. What tricks do the developers pull in playtesting?

If you're playing as a monster, you know you've got to a make a good start. Imagine you get to the end of the map and you're in Stage 1, and then you get a glimpse that Hunters are coming. This happened to me. I saw that the first player coming was Assault. So I think, in Stage 1, 'okay, it's time to get out of here'. What I didn't think was, 'well, where's the Trapper?'. What they did was come towards me and flush me the other way, towards Bucket and the Trapper. So they flush me out into the other two players and trapped me in the Mobile Arena in Stage 1. New players use things like the Cloak on the Support in a panic, but better players use them in an aggressive way to set traps.

monster, both are useful, but if the monster is running – as monster players are prone to for the first half of each round – Lazarus is really reduced to taking potshots from afar and scoring weakspots that the other Hunters are unable to make proper use of, unless they somehow manage to corner it or catch it in the Support's Mobile Arena (a deployable, temporary energy prison).

But when that does happen, you'll be glad of every gun-hand you've got. The game's previous monster, the Goliath (a third is yet to be announced), was a simple soul: punch, chew and throw rocks at the puny humans until they're just stains in the undergrowth. By comparison, the Kraken is the thinking man's monster: a more fragile, 21st Century Cthulhu with the arms of a *Dead Space* Necromorph. It flies. It skulks. It hides. Then suddenly it comes back all big and incinerates you with a Lightning Strike.

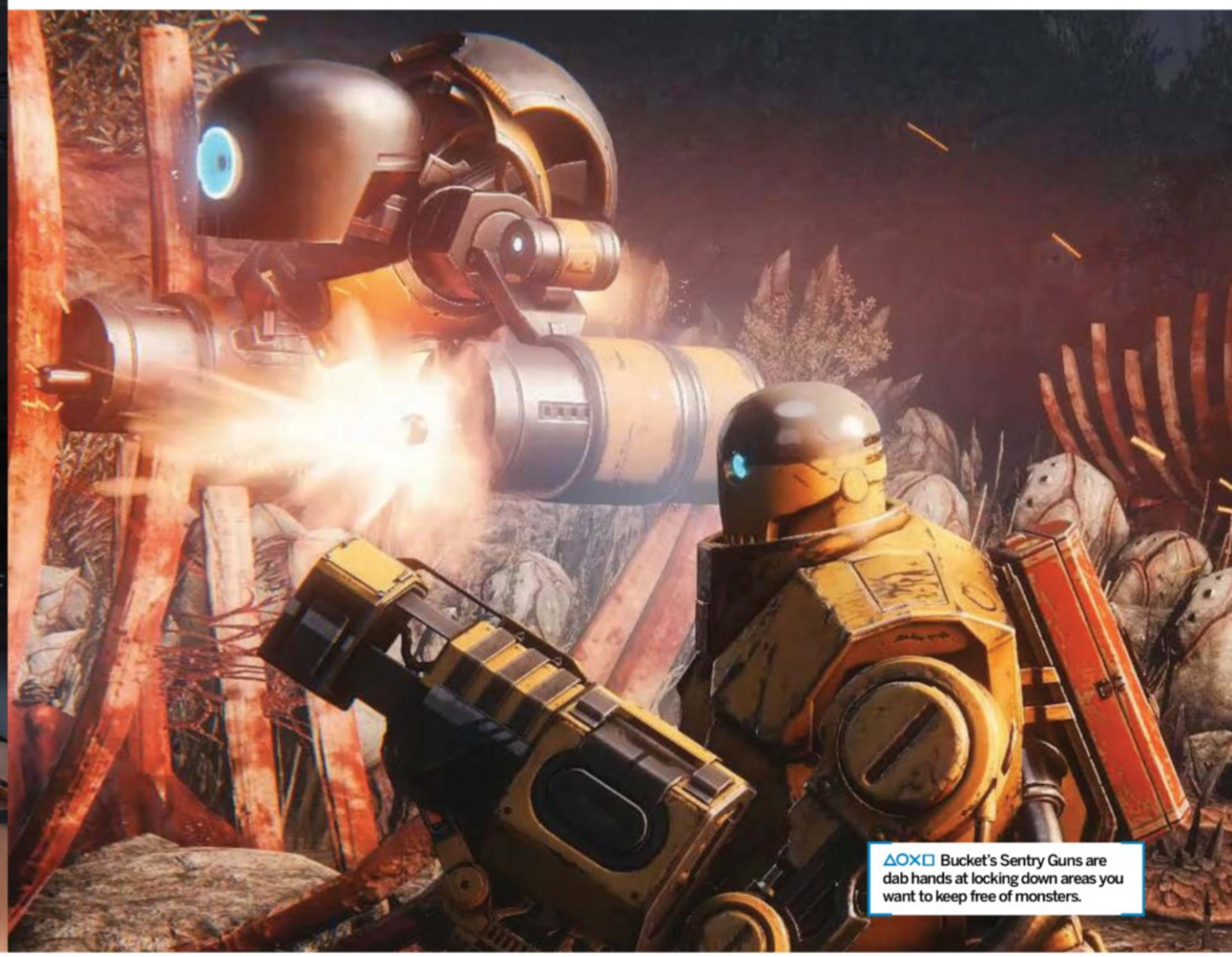
"People get the Goliath quite easily," says *Evolve*'s international producer, Iain Willows. "It's quite a straightforward monster to play: 'I'm brutish and immense, I pick up rocks, I smash'. The Kraken will take a little more getting used to. I played so much Goliath that I thought I was a Goliath player – now I've played a lot more Kraken, I've kind of forgotten about him."



△○×□ Despite breathing the stuff, the Goliath really, really doesn't like being set on fire.

PRIOR FORM

Turtle Rock Studios has a four-player co-op pedigree that's second-to-none: its previous games include the original *Left 4 Dead* and much of the sequel's DLC.



△○×□ Bucket's Sentry Guns are dab hands at locking down areas you want to keep free of monsters.

Perhaps to compensate for its lack of early hardiness, the Kraken also feels easier to evolve. To build armour and grow to the third and final stage of its evolution, each monster needs to hunt and devour wildlife. The Kraken's Aftershock ability – a burst of electricity that covers a medium area – makes zapping herds of grazing fauna a cinch. In our time with it, we were easily knocking down three or four hapless beasties at a time and gorging on their corpses. We hit our final stage of evolution having barely seen our feeble human pursuers.

And make no mistake: in its final form, the Kraken is an easy match for the Goliath. Aftershock and Lightning Strike (a timer-based blast of electricity that deals massive damage) aside, the Kraken can also use a Vortex attack that knocks Hunters flying even at relatively long range – perfect for groups foolishly bunching together for safety. And if you need to make an – ahem – 'tactical withdrawal', the Kraken can also deploy Banshee Mines – hovering balls of electric energy that gravitate quickly towards Hunters and then explode. It took more getting used to than its notably beefier predecessor, but playing as this bellowing, crackling hell beast was every bit as enjoyable as we scattered humans and shocked them into submission.

"THE GOLIATH WAS A SIMPLE SOUL: PUNCH, CHEW AND THROW ROCKS AT THE PUNY HUMANS. THE KRAKEN IS THE THINKING MAN'S MONSTER"



And yet, for all the electrocuting baubles of its final form, the relatively ragtag Hunter team still triumphed over our monster. Or rather, one of Bucket's drones triumphed, ticking off our last health glob as we tried to limp away from a firefight. It was a brutally close game, but served neatly to underline one of the most important things we're learning about *Evolve*: while at times this game walks and talks like your familiar shooter, truly taming the beast will require practice and dedication.

"Generally, [when people are playing the game for the first time], by the time someone gets to play the monster, they've played the Hunters for a bit, therefore they know the roles," says Willows. "Secondly, even though it's a new, class-based, cooperative concept, it's still an FPS. The classes, apart from the Trapper, are quite familiar. But then, on the monster's side, you're talking about a flying, evolving, electricity-based über-beast. It's a new proposition. That's something you've got to learn to play."

Rich Wordsworth

EVOLVE is currently being developed by Turtle Rock Studios. Take a look at the website for more details: **evolvegame.com**

ECHOES AND EVOLUTION

Rime was originally conceived as an action-RPG under the working title 'Echoes Of The Siren'. The player would hunt and craft items during the day in order to prepare for tower defence-based combat that would take place during the night. Since being picked up by Sony, the concept that was 'Echoes Of The Siren' has evolved to become *Rime*, a game that's focused on exploration, navigation and puzzle solving in an open-world. It looks all the better for those changes.

CHANNELLING STUDIO JAPAN

If you're lamenting *The Last Guardian*'s perennial stasis in development limbo, *Rime* could just be the game to tide you over. Since its reveal, the game has drawn comparisons to PlayStation classics *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus*. Indeed, there does seem to be something of the spirit of those games in *Rime*: a sense of mystery and wonder; an atmosphere of beautiful melancholy; a conscious attempt to allow the player to experience the joy of discovery. Sounds wonderful, doesn't it?

STORYTELLING WITH SCENERY

Don't expect this to be a game that's going to spoon-feed you story. Rather than using dialogue, *Rime* will employ environmental storytelling in order to provide the player with hints and intimations about its world. The game won't tell you how you should interpret what you find, with developer Tequila Works insisting that it won't insult the player's intelligence and will trust them to put the pieces together and make their own judgements about *Rime*'s world.

SAIL AWAY

While it's *Rime*'s beautiful cel-shaded art style that's had many pointing to similarities with *The Legend Of Zelda: Wind Waker*, it's another shared aspect that's got us far more interested. In *Rime*'s trailers, we've seen the protagonist on a boat. Now, this could just be a way of setting up the game, the player perhaps getting shipwrecked on an island in its opening. However, Tequila Works has hinted that there could be more than one island, which leads us to believe that sailing could be a key part of the game.

ADVENTURE WITH ACTION

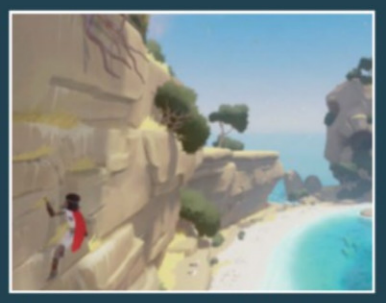
One thing's for sure: *Rime* will not have combat. That doesn't mean there will be no action, however. On the contrary, the developer has said that there will be plenty of that, making use of the protagonist's agility. What will these action scenes entail? We're not sure, but, in trailers, we've seen that the player's not alone – there are boars and birds, surreal globular creatures with spindly legs and more.

Instant Expert

ETA Q1 2015 | **DEV** TEQUILA WORKS | **PUB** SONY

Rime PS4

RIME'S DIVERSE INSPIRATIONS



Odd as it may seem, Tequila Works' Raúl Rubio Munárriz has repeatedly cited the 1963 film *Jason And The Argonauts* as a key inspiration for *Rime*, saying that the studio wanted to capture the spirit of wonder and discovery that film has.



Less surprising than the *Argonauts* link is the fact that Studio Ghibli films like *Spirited Away* and *Princess Mononoke* were an influence on the game. Both those films and *Rime* are aesthetically delightful.



It's not just films that have provided inspiration for *Rime*. The work of surrealist painter Salvadore Dalí has provided a reference point for the game, according to its developers. We haven't seen any melting clocks as of yet, though.



Joaquin Soralla is another artist from whom Tequila Works has drawn in creating *Rime*. Given the clear prevalence of light in the *Rime* trailers and its apparent centrality to the game's visual style, we can easily see the comparison.

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The Evil Within

Has survival-horror... survived?

PS4
ALSO COMING TO PS3

"I DON'T THINK survival-horror has really changed as a genre," says Shinji Mikami, reflecting on the genre he helped create. "Most people recognise *Resident Evil 4* as being a survival-horror game, but when I set out to make the game, the idea was to make an action game with horror essence. So in that respect, it may not be a survival-horror game in its truest form. For games in the survival-horror genre in general, they tend to become more action-oriented as sequels are released. But I don't think survival-horror has really changed as a genre."

The topic is a relevant one, as Mikami, the man behind the *Resident Evil* series from its start through to the famous fourth instalment, is returning to the genre he made famous with new title *The Evil Within*. Famously swearing off the genre after *Resi 4*, Mikami was offered the chance to make numerous horror games since, but only now is returning to the genre. He elaborates as to why.

"There were opportunities to make a horror game, but I wasn't feeling up to it at the time. Nowadays, I think games are changing to focus more on action rather than horror, and perhaps you could say 50 per cent of my motivation to come back to the genre was because of that. I want to make a proper horror game again.

"When it comes to what fans want from a horror game, it seems to me they want to play more of an adventure-type game rather than an action-type game – where players' skills are less required and more emphasis is put on the scary atmosphere. I think the sense of 'how the heck am I gonna make it alive in this situation?' is what players are looking for in horror games nowadays, and lots of modern 'survival-horror' games don't have that anymore."

"AMMO AND RESOURCES ARE LIMITED"

However, Mikami is keen to stress a difference between straight-up horror games and survival-horror. Bringing up indie horror titles like *Amnesia* and *Outlast*, he explains that *The Evil Within* will take a different, more classic approach.



www.imagineshop.co.uk



PRIOR FORM

VANQUISH A totally different kind of game, but an incredible one nonetheless. Proof that Shinji Mikami can turn his hand to a number of genres.

△○×□ *The Evil Within* along with the recent announcement of an HD version of the *Resident Evil* remake shows that demand is still high for classic survival-horror.





WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ The master of survival-horror returns to the genre he created.

□ A return to the wonderful gameplay of *Resident Evil 4*.

✕ It looks like it'll include some seriously messed up monster designs.

○ A genuinely scary game for a change? We hope so.



△○×□ Could this be the start of a new franchise to rival *Resident Evil*? Probably not, to be fair.

"A lot of the indie games are true horror games in my opinion. So those titles didn't really influence *The Evil Within*. A survival-horror game is its own unique genre – it's neither true horror nor an action game. I believe for an indie game to be successful it really needs to stand out on its own, have a very clear identity and be targeted towards that genre's specific audience.

"Rewinding a little bit, the very first time I got the chance to make a horror game was *RE1*. But I knew if I made the game as a true horror game it would mean that it would lose some of the entertainment appeal as content. Running around and just trying to survive the entire game would just be too stressful. So in order to make it appeal to a wider audience I made the game a little softer. If you think of it as a beverage it would not be water or juice but rather like an alcoholic drink. Not wine or sake but beer, an alcoholic beverage consumed by most adults. Beer was the positioning of *RE1*."

Still, Mikami seems eager to bring back the resource management and careful, considered pacing that made the early *Resident Evil* games so tense and enjoyable.

"Ammo and other resources are very limited when compared to other modern games people consider as survival-horror. So guns can't always be your solution. You might have to find alternative ways to kill an enemy; maybe by sneak-kills or by using traps within the environment. The difficulty level we (the dev team) recommend people to play is called Survival Mode. I would be lying if I said that the game wasn't difficult. But I will say that the sense of relief when you do survive will be that much greater and more rewarding."

There is no doubt that traditional survival-horror is a genre that, ironically, has struggled to survive in the many years since its inception. If Shinji Mikami and *The Evil Within* can give it a much-needed shot in the arm, perhaps the genre could see a resurgence on the new generation of consoles. The only issue now is how it will perform against new contenders like *Silent Hills* and *Alien: Isolation*.

Sam Smith

THE EVIL WITHIN is being exhumed by Tango Gameworks and Bethesda. Check the website for more details: **theevilwithin.com**

ETA OCTOBER | **DEV** CI GAMES | **PUB** CI GAMES | **TWITTER** @LOTF_GAME

Lords Of The Fallen

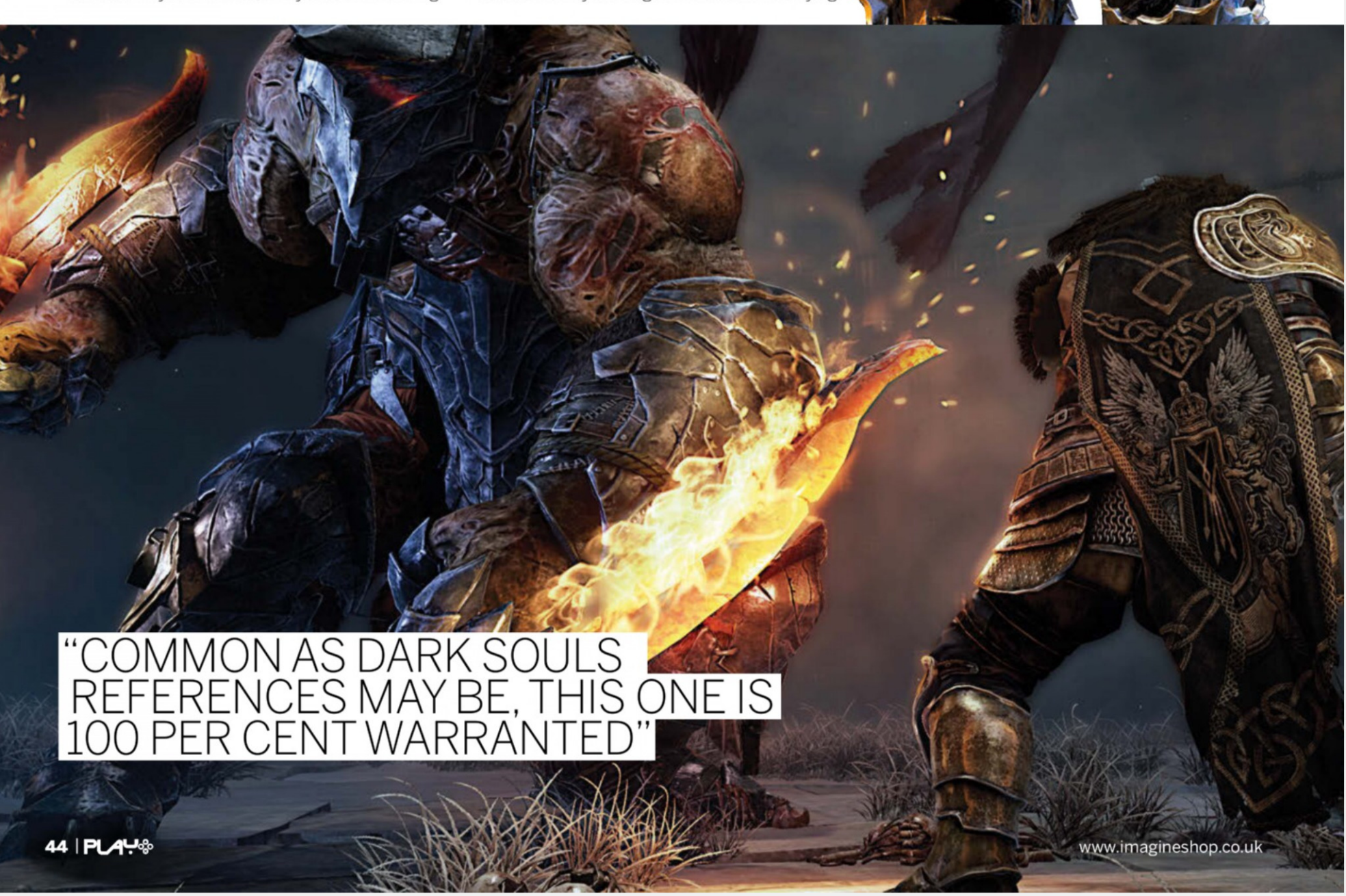
If only it could be so grossly incandescent

PS4

IF YOU DON'T want your game to be compared to *Dark Souls*, a good starting point is probably to make something that is nothing like From Software's hardcore action-RPG in the first place. If, on the other hand, you've made *Lords Of The Fallen*, you kinda have to expect such comparisons, since you've basically made an ever-so-slightly different version of the same game.

The comparison seems lazy at first – they're both third-person action-RPGs, sure, but in a world where everyone is likening other games to *Dark Souls* just because they're a bit hard, that yardstick is starting to get a bit battered around the edges. Still, the deeper you dig, the more similarities emerge. There's the setting, a fairly grim and oppressive gothic fantasy world. There's the control scheme, identical down to the parries and the modified leaping and running attacks. There's the difficulty level, where even standard enemies can be your downfall if you aren't cautious. And then there are the smaller details, from health items recharging at checkpoints to experience lost upon death being recoverable if you can get back to it without dying.





"COMMON AS DARK SOULS REFERENCES MAY BE, THIS ONE IS 100 PER CENT WARRANTED"

www.imagineshop.co.uk

PRIOR FORM

ENEMY FRONT CI Games' last offering was this terrible WWII shooter, but don't worry. *Lords Of The Fallen* is already a better game.

△○×□ Like so many of the enemies you'll face in *Lords Of The Fallen*, these ugly buggers aren't as tough as they look.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ Collect any lost experience from where you died. Like in *Dark Souls*.

□ Mix up parries, heavy attacks and rolls to overcome your foes. Like in *Dark Souls*.

✕ Learn boss attack patterns and patiently whittle down their health. Like in *Dark Souls*.

○ Stand alone against the armies of evil. Like in... wait, that's different. Praise the sun!



Common as *Dark Souls* references may be these days, this one is 100 per cent warranted – *Lords Of The Fallen* is a *Souls* game in all but name.

Since similarities are all too common, it's probably worth looking at the key differences between the games instead, and these don't exactly pan out in CI Games' favour. For one thing, there's nothing comparable to From's ingenious cross-discipline multiplayer here – *Lords Of The Fallen* is very much a solo game and while that may not sound like much if you've never taken a *Souls* game online, multiplayer is a large part of the reason the **Play** team has collectively chalked up somewhere in the region of 500 hours across the *Souls* series in total. Gimmicks and scripting don't exactly fill us with confidence either, one early encounter in our hands-on sessions being a rock-hard berserk beast that will basically kill you outright unless you lead it to a nearby pit covered in conveniently weak grating. It's the bosses that have proven the greater letdown so far, though, every one we've seen and faced in *Lords Of The Fallen* so far being more grind than battle – tired attack patterns and bloated HP pools seem to make these fights more wars of patience than of wits and skill.

Our main hope at this point is that the big beasties we've been exposed to and the areas that have been opened up to us have sold the game short. In terms of map design and enemy encounters *Lords Of The Fallen* seems to emulate the *Souls* experience perfectly, and this works hugely in its favour. The trap the game stands to fall into, though, is thinking that players want a trial-and-error experience punctuated with arbitrarily tricky bosses. It's not easy to work out exactly what it is about the grim and desperate world of *Dark Souls* that appeals to players – hell, we're not even sure From Software knows itself. And while elements of *Lords* show that CI Games is on the right track, other aspects display something of a lack of understanding of the game being emulated here. Still, the game itself plays well for the most part and looks great (there's pretty much parity between PC and PS4 versions), so here's hoping the bosses, gear and areas we haven't seen yet can do enough to elevate *Lords* to be something great.

Luke Albigés

LORDS OF THE FALLEN is resting at the Majula bonfire with CI Games. Invade for more details: **www.lordsofthefallen.com**

IN THE MEANTIME...

THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM
We still haven't finished it, and at this rate we probably never will. Have you?

ETA 21 NOVEMBER | **DEV** BIOWARE | **PUB** EA | **TWITTER** @DRAGONAGE

Dragon Age: Inquisition

First the best, second the worst

PS4

"THE RESPONSE HAS been fantastic," says Cameron Lee, producer on *Dragon Age: Inquisition*. He's talking about the impressions of gamers lucky enough to play an early build of BioWare's upcoming RPG, the third entry in the troubled *Dragon Age* series. *Dragon Age: Origins* might have been well received, but *Dragon Age II* is widely agreed to be a poor back-step for a developer with a usually consistent track record. *Inquisition* marks a new start of sorts, albeit one that still has strong narrative ties to the world and stories of the past games.

"One of the key things we wanted to show was how the choices work, so we have hours of content that's attached to a specific choice and what's cool about it is you also get to see the impacts of not making the other choice," says Lee, when discussing about the demo fans played at E3. "It's something we think hard about, not being able to see everything in one go. The Templar/Mage conflict is something that the player can bring to an end relatively early in the game if they choose to and it was a big part of the ending of *Dragon Age II* so was something that we wanted to get right and for it to have weight and impact. Having exclusive content really does provide that weight but we did want to make sure that people could see the consequences of their choices so they can see what happened and the rippling out of consequences."

Lee admits that the reaction to the past games has been mixed, and in developing *Inquisition*, BioWare has tried to keep everyone happy. "We started out by looking at what players liked about *Dragon Age: Origins* and *Dragon Age II*," he says. "We look at what the market's doing too because it's been so long since those games; when you're planning a game that takes three or four years to make, you have to look ahead and try to predict what might happen. We did look long and hard at everything, not just at what the core fans want but also what other fans who don't necessarily talk to us on the forums or on Twitter and we can gauge a lot of their reactions through the telemetry data that we get."

A key example of this is the combat. Vastly changed from *Origins* to *Dragon Age II*, the fighting in *Inquisition* seems to be going back to the original style, albeit still with a few differences. "The combat in *Dragon Age: Origins* was very different to its sequel," Lee explains. "In *Inquisition*, even if you're running around fighting rather than using the tactical view the combat is slowed down, there's more weight to the animations and impact to the hits. We've brought back the tactical view for all platforms and we've improved on it so you can follow your party of characters, zoom in, pan it and get a good feel for the environment. You can also hover over enemies to see info about them, their strengths and weaknesses and stuff like that. Even the action combat is more strategic because you can chop and change at will between characters, so







△○×□ We expect big things from *Inquisition* – *Dragon Age II* left a bad taste in our mouths.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ It's BioWare! The company has a pretty great track record, by all accounts.
- □ It seems to correct a lot of the mistakes that *Dragon Age II* made.
- ✕ A huge world to explore, albeit one split into different sections.
- ○ Plus, it's a BioWare game, so that means some romance!

you might take your archer up to a cliff face to give him a tactical advantage but the enemy AI is going to react to your strategy by laying traps down and trying to manoeuvre around you."

While the current trend in fantasy-RPGs is to have a huge open world, *Dragon Age: Inquisition* will take a slightly more linear approach. You'll visit various areas and, while each one is itself a large open land, there isn't one connected, open world as such. That said, Lee still describes it as a huge place to explore.

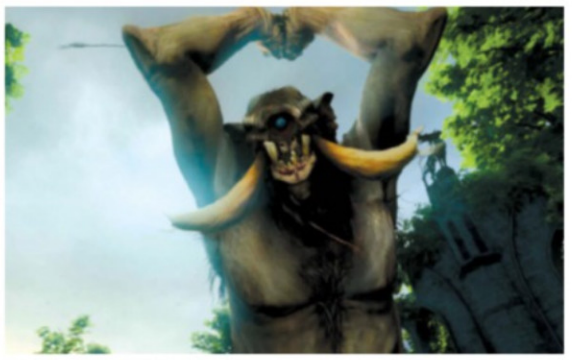
"The world is incredibly open now; it's a really big game. The story that we're telling spans different nations so what we've done is take areas of those nations that make sense of the story and made open areas for them. Because they're themed for the story, we've been able to do is introduce conflicts into those areas, so even when you're just running around exploring you're getting that sense of conflict and a glimpse of the consequences of what you're not dealing with in the world.

"Our world master system understands where you are in the story and the decisions you've made so even if you've been completely ignoring the story, which you can, you're going to see fade rifts everywhere, Templars and Mages battling each other, a civil war underway and as you start to bring stability to this world you're going to see the world master system adapt and change what's happening around you."

With *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* on the horizon and *Skyrim* still relatively fresh in a lot of people's memories, *Dragon Age: Inquisition* has a lot to prove to make a mark in the fantasy-RPG market. If anyone can do it, it's the talented members of BioWare. They tend to get most things right, after all...

Sam Smith

DRAGON AGE: INQUISITION is being developed by BioWare. Check the website for more details: **www.dragonage.com**





ANATOMY OF... HANDSOME JACK

Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel is coming this October, promising to give greater insight into main antagonist Handsome Jack and detail his ongoing descent into villainy. But who is this mysterious masked man?



GREED IS GOOD

Jack is originally a minor employee of the Hyperion corporation on the frontier planet, Pandora. His nickname comes from his mask, covering up his scarred face – although you never find out how or why he was injured. Jack craves power, and manipulates the events of the first *Borderlands* from behind the scenes in an attempt to open a hidden vault below Pandora's surface.

HAIL THE CHIEF

Things go Jack's way, and by the start of *Borderlands 2* he has taken control of Hyperion as well as essentially becoming dictator of Pandora itself. Living in his custom moon base (built in the shape of an H), Jack doles out tasks to mercenary vault hunters, including the four player-characters. His methods and motivations are both murkier than toilet water.

PANDORA'S BOX

Jack's aim is to find the second hidden vault on Pandora and open it, releasing an ancient alien warrior that he plans to use to destroy all who oppose him. How could that possibly go wrong? The monster is eventually killed by the players, who in turn finish off Jack with a swift bullet to the face. That won't help his looks...

THAT CEO CAME FROM THE MOON

Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel will delve into Jack's actions between the two main games, detailing his rise to power as he becomes more and more ruthless. You'll once again be working for him, this time on the moon as you take on rival bands of mercenaries and corporations in a hostile takeover.

ETA 17 OCTOBER | **DEV** 2K AUSTRALIA | **PUB** 2K | **TWITTER** @BORDERLANDS

Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel PS3

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PROJECT CARS

How Slightly Mad Studios is making the shiniest, sexiest racing simulator yet



In his Seventies motorsport movie masterpiece, *Le Mans*, Steve McQueen famously said: "Racing is life. Everything before or after is just waiting". The King of Cool is of course right, but waiting can be excruciating, especially when it involves waiting for the most highly anticipated racing title since the launch of Polyphony Digital's seminal *Gran Turismo*. In a roundabout way, we are talking about the community-developed next-gen simulator, *Project CARS* and, being the standout chaps that we are here at **Play**, we've grabbed an exclusive chat with Slightly Mad Studios' creative director, Andy Tudor, to discuss the development of what well could become the driving game to define a generation.

When it comes to creating a truly great simulator, realism in all aspects of the build is paramount. The *Gran Turismo* series has often come close to perfectly exploiting the Sony drivetrain underneath the bonnet but, in some areas, Kaz's racer has always fallen short in one area or another. Tudor, however, is confident that



WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

Yes, because I like cars.
Ian Dickson

Looks totally awesome. Looking forward to playing.
James Ford

I'm excited for the guy that thought up the name 'Project Cars', it's nice he is no longer sat in the corner of a padded room licking frogs!
Gaz Taylor

Project CARS has tightened every last screw, from the graphics to the handling.

"The additional power and memory of the PS4 allows us to do things we couldn't on previous platforms," he explains. "Even though we look at the game 24/7, there are still times when someone takes a screenshot or we watch a replay and, for a moment, your brain thinks it's real." This is a result of Slightly Mad Studios' intricate attention to every tiny visual detail, from the perfectly modeled suspension arms on the cars to an "astrologically-accurate constellation in the night sky". That's right, *Project CARS* is not only providing racers with the best car modeling we've ever seen, the environments you are going to race them in (from the grass to the sky) are on the top step of the podium too.

Standard stuff like changeable weather (the "number one request from the community") will make an appearance but in more glorious depth and detail than ever before. If it rains, the track surface will become dynamic. A drying line could emerge or, alternatively, there could be so much water you end up virtually aquaplaning (y'know, that thing where your car makes like a boat and starts floating across the track uncontrollably, scaring you shitless). Visually, all these changing weather conditions will look "beautiful" according to Tudor thanks to Slightly Mad's ability to "move beyond the restrictions of previous console generations and concentrate on everything that our art department could possibly want."

This means "bigger textures, more polygons, higher detail, more render passes, [and] better anti-aliasing". Yep, you got it, *Project CARS* is going to continue the racing game tradition of becoming the first genre to truly exploit new hardware. Of course, the conditions will also affect the gameplay. You will have to transition seamlessly into darkness in endurance races, while navigating an evolving surface that will gradually become littered with used rubber (stop laughing at the back) just like the real thing. You'll even whip up stray leaves at the side of the track!

Now, looking sexy is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to producing a successful racing game, especially when you're trying to muscle into the simulator market currently dominated by the Polyphony Digital behemoth. As *Need For Speed Shift* and its sequel found out, accurate handling dynamics are as important, if not more so, than the eye candy. If you've ever driven in anger around a real track, you'll know that driving fast is not just about the laws of physics. There's a sensory experience that is hard to replicate but Tudor feels that this is something *Project CARS* will be able to reproduce. "Wherever possible, we get the team out on track days to experience the cars in real life. There's not much point trying to simulate something you've never personally done, right?" You're right there, Sir.

"In addition to the data we get via CAD, laser-scanning, and sound recording, there is also this 'emotional layer': what it feels like to actually have sat in that car and raced it." This is where Slightly Mad has been employing the services of professional drivers; guys like Ben Collins (previously the Stig on *Top Gear*) to offer up their experience. It's not a new practice amongst racing







△○✕□ Water effects in particular have impressed us. And the grass, obviously.

VIRTUAL INSANITY



Car models are so accurate that they appear photorealistic. Everything is as it should be down to the individual nuts and bolts thanks to the greater graphical processing.

Professional drivers have helped to ensure the handling is first-class. Coupled this with reduced input lag and the game's dynamics are set to be worthy of the simulator tag.



Minute environment details will make you forget you're in a digital world, while day/night cycles and weather will truly convince you that it's raining in your living room.

VR is going to result in better perspective. "It gives this sense of depth – you can really gauge the distance between the wheel and the road ahead," explains Andy Tudor.

game developers but from the gameplay videos it looks like the results are truly authentic.

It's not just sending the build team out on jolly days out to drive cars fast, nor the input of real racers, that has solely helped *Project CARS* reach the levels of realism that have us positively foaming at the mouth. There are many components that ensure the handling is worthy of the simulation tag, as Tudor elucidates.

"For Slightly Mad Studios, the key components are the core technology which runs the physics, utilising real-world numbers to generate vehicle dynamics, providing lots of parameters for our vehicle engineers to modify the handling based on information from our professional drivers, providing instant feedback to the player through visual, audio and force feedback for gamepads and steering wheels, and providing driving aids to allow a novice through to professional skilled drivers to enjoy the game." So, Slightly Mad is taking it *really* seriously, covering every imaginable base.

"75 DIFFERENT SETUP PARAMETERS FOR US TO TWEAK SUGGESTS THAT MARIO KART FANS SHOULD LOOK ELSEWHERE"

Project CARS runs the physics and input systems independently of all the gameplay and render systems according to Tudor. This means your inputs on the peripheral of your choice will be calculated in the physics and displayed on your screen in just two milliseconds. If this can be run flawlessly, it could send the annoying control lag that has blighted many a driving game to the scrap heap. Couple this with plenty of real-world data direct from the myriad of car manufacturers represented in the game and you've got a truly stunning recipe for success.

The fact that Tudor et al are developing with a steering wheel in mind should also be a cause célèbre for the more hardcore among us. As he explains, "The more feedback we are able to provide to the player, the better the experience," referencing the abundance of avenues which the team has been fine-tuning to promote realism. Feedback to the steering wheel via alignment and

PRIOR FORM



Shift 2: Unleashed
The second in *NFS*'s simulation sub-franchise, *Shift 2* made racing fun again but wasn't a true *Gran Turismo* rival.

IN THE MEANTIME...

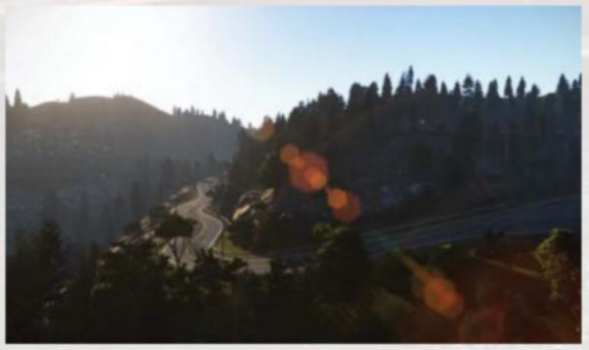


Gran Turismo 6
Dust off the PS3 and boot up the greatest *GT* game ever created, marvelling at its similarity to the previous five franchise outings.

△○×□ Is this finally the racing game to satisfy all simulation enthusiasts? It may well be.



△○×□ There are lots of things that look beautiful when wet. We bet you weren't expecting it to be a car, though.





rumble forces, audio cues from sliding tyres, and a cockpit full of working dials (as well as driver movements). This makes us very, very excited.

While it's obvious simulation is the name of the game, Tudor wouldn't confirm to us exactly where *Project CARS* lies on the arcade-to-simulation spectrum but talk of telemetry, accurately flexing tyre models, a "volumetric throttle system" and 75 different setup parameters for us to tweak suggests that *Mario Kart* fans should look elsewhere. That's not to say there won't be a host of driver assists to help those still in need of L plates enjoy the game, with steering and braking aids designed to support less experienced sim racers.

Still, *Project CARS* has *Gran Turismo* firmly in its sights with Tudor's proclamation that "we're in it for the long haul". One of the things that he believes will help the game prosper going forward is the community aspect (something we thought could have hindered development as everyone pulls in different directions). "We've hit pretty much everything we wanted," Tudor says. "The game has definitely changed, been remolded, had a few course corrections, and has expanded beyond that initial overview." With the community straight at the heart of these continual improvements, the "passionate opinions and disagreements" have, in Tudor's opinion, only helped to drive development forward. Despite this, he's still wary of labeling *Project CARS* a 'tipping point' in the simulation's history.

"With *Project CARS* we're offering a fresh perspective on the kind of authentic racing experience that players have only really had access to via *Gran Turismo*. We have beautiful 1:1 recreations of the cars and a wide selection of motorsports and areas of car culture on display. We've got the largest track roster in recent history. We've got a career mode that puts the emphasis back on racing rather than grinding for cash and leveling up through a traditional slow-to-fast progression. And we've got the stuff that gamers have been used to in PC sim racing such as pit stops and authentic handling and deep tuning mechanics, along with great console features like multiplayer, asynchronous time trials, social features, and a wealth of accessibility features allowing you to tailor the experience to your level of skill. So it may not be a tipping point but we hope that we offer a credible alternative to what players have been used to for a few years now."

If it can all be pulled off, *Project CARS* looks set to become one of the seminal titles in racing game history. The name may be uninspiring but the content, gameplay, and execution all sounds stunning. With Bandai Namco now onboard to publish the title, the game can be given the global release its hard work deserves. What's more, it should enable the developer to produce DLC to increase longevity, with an announcement expected regarding additional content soon.

The PS4's launch was noticeably bereft of a proper racing title but, with *Project CARS* showing championship-winning pedigree, our anticipation levels are reaching the redline. And if you even vaguely like racing games, yours should be too.

TOP TEN GUILTY PLEASURE GAMES

MOST OF THE TIME WE HAVE IMPECCABLE TASTE, ONLY PLAYING THE ABSOLUTE BEST OF THE BEST. STILL, OCCASIONALLY EVEN WE HERE AT PLAY LIKE TO LET LOOSE AND PLAY SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS UNIVERSALLY ACCLAIMED. THINK OF THESE GAMES AS VIRTUAL JUNK FOOD: THEY AREN'T GOOD FOR OUR HEALTH, BUT THEY TASTE DAMN GOOD



DYNASTY WARRIORS

IT'S NO SECRET that we love *Dynasty Warriors*, but the series still has a bad reputation in the West. We understand the gameplay can be a bit repetitive, but when that gameplay consists of kicking the asses of thousands of soldiers with enormous weapons and badass magic, why exactly is it a bad thing? The *Dynasty Warriors* entries are good games, and we will continue to shout such a fact from the rooftops until it sticks.



METAL GEAR SOLID 2

MGS2 IS A good game with a bizarre, almost crippling story. We still aren't exactly sure what was going on at the Big Shell, but we do know that whiner Raiden is no replacement for the grizzled heroism of our boy, Solid Snake. In many ways, *MGS2* was the worst thing to happen to the franchise, as although *3* was great, *MGS4* was an entire game dedicated to explaining what happened in *2*. But despite all this, we still love it.



RESIDENT EVIL 6

FANS OF THE original *Resident Evil* games can't be happy with the direction the series has taken in the last decade. While *Resi 4* was an excellent revitalisation of a franchise in danger of becoming irrelevant, subsequent titles have focused more on the action aspect, becoming less scary as a result. So no, *Resi 6* is not a good *Resi* game. What it is, though, is a fun shooter with a crazy story that is a blast when playing co-op with a friend.



SNIPER ELITE

IF SHOOTING NAZIS in the face in incredibly graphic slow motion is wrong, we don't want to be right. *Sniper Elite* is an average series, a fun sniping sim offset by too much bland shooting with other weapons, but the amazing killcam saves it. The appeal never gets old, seeing your bullet travel through the body of an enemy soldier, shattering bones, splitting organs and tearing flesh. Yeah, it's horrible, but we are kind of sick.



RIBBIT KING

AN OBSCURE PS2 game that nobody played, *Ribbit King* holds a special place in the hearts of the **Play** team thanks to the bi-annual *Ribbit King* Christmas Cup (which is rarely held at Christmas). Revolving around the fictional sport of frolf (frog golf, duh), *Ribbit King* has you attempting to hit a frog into a hole in as few shots as possible. The problem with this is that the frog tends to do whatever the hell it wants...



MORTAL KOMBAT

THE NEW MORTAL *Kombat* game wasn't a great fighting game. Compared to its contemporaries, *Mortal Kombat* didn't hold up as a competitive fighter developed for high-level competition. So why did we enjoy it so much? That's easy: fatalities. No game features gore as imaginative or absurd, with some of the horrific things these characters do to each other enough to give a *Daily Mail* reader a heart attack due to moral outrage.



DEADLY PREMONITION

ARGUABLY THE MOST divisive game of the last generation, *Deadly Premonition* got 1/10 scores from some outlets and 10/10 from others. Some say it's a work of subversive genius in the style of *Twin Peaks*, others think it is just a poorly-made mess with ugly graphics and an awful script. The thing is, it all adds to the strange otherworldliness that makes *Deadly Premonition* one of the most bizarrely atmospheric games of last gen. It's utterly unique, and as long as you know what are getting yourself into, everyone should give it a try. Don't be put off by the slow opening and awful controls and you'll find a surprisingly decent story as well.



THE SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE

THE SIMPSONS HAS had plenty of terrible games over the years (remember *The Simpsons Wrestling* on PSone?) but *Road Rage*, a rip-off of *Crazy Taxi* and *GTA*, was surprisingly enjoyable. Driving around a fully-realised Springfield was cool, and some of the lines were actually amusing enough to elicit a chuckle. It's aged pretty badly, but at the time we probably enjoyed *Road Rage* a lot more than we should have done. For being the best of a bad bunch of *Simpsons* games, and by no means the worst *GTA* clone of the time, *Road Rage* actually raises a fond, nostalgic smile when we think of it. 'Eat my shorts', and so on.



TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

A GTA CLONE cashing in at the height of the series' popularity on PS2, *True Crime* was at once both wholly unremarkable and surprisingly enjoyable, in a terrible sort of way. The hand-to-hand kung-fu combat was pretty fun, but what really set the game apart was towards the end of the story when supernatural elements are introduced and you suddenly go from fighting criminal thugs to *ancient mystical dragons*. Erm, what? The whole thing jumps the shark so high it enters orbit, turning from a gritty crime thriller to a cheesy kung-fu movie. It's bloody great, if only for how utterly insane it is.



WWE

WE ARE HUGE wrestling fans on **Play**, and as such we still enjoy the yearly *WWE* games despite knowing that really, they just aren't very good. We hoped and dreamed that a new developer would take up the games once the licence moved over to 2K, and while steps have been made, it still hasn't happened. We like these games because we like wrestling, not because they are good games, but we can't deny it is fun to play as our favourite wrestlers and beat each other up every now and then. Creating your own fighters is fun too, as is navigating a full season mode and creating your own storylines. If only the actual gameplay wasn't so bloody rubbish, eh? Here's hoping *2K15* is a big improvement...



PS4 EVOLUTION

How your favourite games are better on PS4



OPEN WORLD

If this year's E3 was anything to go by, open-world games are set to become even more abundant on the PlayStation 4. Matthew Edwards takes a look at their past, present and future

In the earliest days of the games industry, the idea of wandering off the established path wasn't something that most developers had the time or resources to entertain. Levels, stages and zones were the order of the day, and for every functioning doorway that advanced you down the linear pathway, you'd walk past 100 more that'd remain forever locked. The only freedom the likes of *Space Invaders*, *Pac-Man* and *Defender* offered was letting you decide when – rather than how – the objective was accomplished. And try as you might, you couldn't climb up the scaffolding in *Donkey Kong* and let the thieving ape have it with a sawn-off shotgun.

Unsurprisingly, the first gaming genre that began to break away from linear progression was the RPG. *Ultima I: The First Age Of Darkness* (1981) featured four continents and eight kingdoms that could be explored in any order, and when David Braben and Ian Bell released *Elite* just three years later, players were given free reign of a procedurally generated universe made up of eight galaxies and 2,048 planets. This was a milestone moment for open-world design and it ultimately paved the way for *Turbo Esprit* (1986), *Sid Meier's Pirates!* (1987) and *Wasteland* (1988) – the latter of which featured multiple solutions to its many quests.

Another landmark title in open-world design was *The Elder Scrolls: Arena*, a game so vast that it can't be accurately measured. But while the Nineties saw a dramatic increase in non-linear PC games, the same can't be said for the original PlayStation. Aside from some excellent JRPGs, only a handful of titles featured open-world gameplay. Among these, *Grand Theft Auto* and *Driver* stand out as the most memorable, not least because they let you drive around a whole city – while *Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver* was one of the few PSone games set in an interconnected world of *Zelda*-esque proportions.

The true renaissance of open-world console gaming wouldn't come into play until *Grand Theft Auto III* appeared on the PlayStation 2. It wasn't the first open-world game powered by the Emotion Engine as *Midnight Club: Street Racing* beat it to the punch, but it was the first to marry non-linearity with sandbox gameplay on such an impressive scale. A number of imitators followed, including the cockney antics of *The Getaway* and the rough justice dynamic of *True Crime: Streets Of LA*, but the only open worlds that superseded Liberty City during the sixth console generation were Vice City and San Andreas.

If *Grand Theft Auto III* and its two sequels cemented the popularity of open-world gaming then the PlayStation 3 helped usher in its golden era. Indeed, there are so many excellent examples of open-world games on Sony's enduring hardware that listing them all would be an exercise in futility – particularly as many of them rank among the best-selling games on the system. But while *Saints Row 2* and *Red Dead Redemption* didn't stray too far from the established game plan, other developers pushed the open-world envelope in new and interesting directions.

Ubisoft Montreal let you climb to the top of the tallest buildings in *Assassin's Creed*. Criterion Games let you roam freely with other online drivers in *Burnout Paradise*. And From Software dared you to explore an interconnected world of twists and turns where discovery and readiness didn't always go hand-in-hand. Some of these innovations have been

"WE'VE NOW REACHED A POINT WHERE OPEN-WORLD DESIGN IS MORE THE NORM THAN THE EXCEPTION"

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5 THINGS EVERY SANDBOX NEEDS



DISTRACTIONS

We're not talking about 200 collectibles hidden in the world. We're talking distractions that could be anything from shooting pool to rampaging across a city in a giant mechanical spider.



SIGHT-SEEING

When an open world is so large that it takes a couple of days to get your bearings, some memorable landmarks go a long way to giving each area a sense of place and purpose.



JACK OF ALL TRADES

No matter how many gameplay mechanics an open-world game chooses to tackle, every single one needs to feel like it took longer than a day to develop.



SING WHEN YOU'RE WINNING

After *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* set the trend with everything from *Billie Jean* to *Bark At The Moon* and *Rock Box*, music has been an important ingredient.



EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

A gripping narrative can turn an average open-world game into a great one, but what really sets the best-of-the-best apart are the chance encounters and random discoveries.



△○×□ For all its shortcomings, *Watch Dogs* made the player feel like there was more to its world than simply driving and shooting.

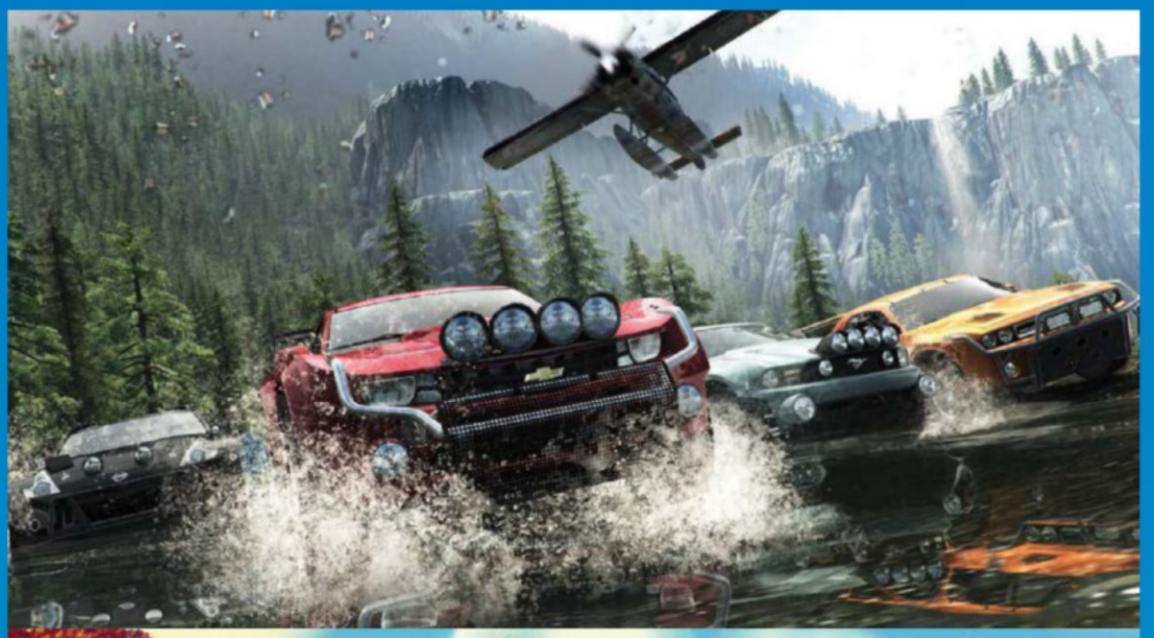
explored further on the PlayStation 4. *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* encouraged you to harpoon sharks and plunder ships on the Caribbean Ocean while *Need For Speed Rivals* blurred the line between solo and multiplayer even further.

We've now reached a point where open-world design is more the norm than the exception. The most recent additions to the PlayStation family are *inFamous: Second Son*, the latest in a long line of open-world superhero games that began with *Spider-Man 2* on the PlayStation 2, and *Watch Dogs*; a fairly innovative title that gives you the wireless key to an entire city. But just what does the future hold for open-world gaming on the PlayStation 4? Is an enhanced port of *Grand Theft Auto V* the best we can expect or will Michael, Trevor and Franklin be stripped of the open-world crown long before the inevitable sequel?

As it stands, we can think of at least 14 open-world games that are currently in development for the PlayStation 4 – and three of these we've played already. The most obvious is *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain*. Many of us are already intimately familiar with Camp Omega thanks to *Ground Zeroes*, but with Hideo Kojima claiming that the full game will be 200 times larger than the demo, the temptation is to let our imaginations run wild. We know that you'll be able to commandeer a wide range of vehicles. We know that you'll be able to build your own base camp and recruit captured soldiers. But what we really want to know is whether Kojima can craft an open-world that feels truly cutting edge.









△○×□ By procedurally generating an entire universe of planets, *No Man's Sky* could be the kind of game where it's impossible to see everything.

GAME CHANGER: SHENMUE



It may be celebrating its 15th anniversary at the end of the year, but Yu Suzuki's *Shenmue* is arguably the most pivotal open-world game. Coming on not one, not two but three GD-ROMs, all of which had to be switched out of the Dreamcast at certain points, the original game is estimated to have cost around $47 million. That's vastly expensive even by today's standards, but when you consider the freedom that the player had to explore Yokosuka city and interact with its citizens – many of whom were fully voiced – the budget starts to make a little bit more sense.

Ryo Hazuki was the man at the centre of *Shenmue*'s story and your mission was to find his father's killer, but whenever the game gave you a break from navigating quick-time Events and beating up thugs with the *Virtua Fighter*-style fighting system, you could get a job as a forklift driver, collect capsule figurines and even play *Space Harrier* at the amusement arcade. All in all, *Shenmue*'s open-endedness was way ahead of its time.

Whatever the case, the next step in open-world design could arrive before 2015. *Destiny* has already captivated us with its free-roaming environments and co-op, and while some might argue that it's not an open-world game in the strictest sense, it encourages you to wander off and talk to strangers. Bad advice to tell your children, but this is the basis of nonlinear game design.

Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor, on the other hand, is an open-world RPG in every sense of the word. Monolith Productions has acquired the key to Sauron's domain, but far from using it as a substitute for originality, it's designed a system that lets you build an army of procedurally generated Uruks. Innovation often comes in the form of new IP. That's why *The Crew*, with its team-based structure and persistent open-world (which allegedly takes 90 minutes to navigate from coast-to-coast), is one racer we're watching closely. And yet, while it's refreshing to see Ubisoft backing new studios with fresh ideas, expectations are also high for *Assassin's Creed Unity* and *Far Cry 4*. Both are promising online co-op modes that will tie in seamlessly with the single-player experience – something that's becoming more and more of an industry trend. But while *Far Cry 4* looks like a routine sequel,

"UNITY'S DISREGARD FOR LAST-GEN SYSTEMS COULD HINT AT SOMETHING MORE AMBITIOUS"

Unity's disregard for last-gen systems could hint at something more ambitious.

Ambition isn't something that's lacking with CD Projekt RED and its bold claim that *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* will be 20 per cent larger than *Skyrim*. As confident as the team is, though, a larger open-world won't mean much unless it's as densely packed as Bethesda and Rockstar's best efforts. After all, there aren't many people who think *Just Cause 2* is

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PS3 INSPIRATION



HAIL TO THE KING

The instant that *GTA V* arrived on the scene with its vision of California, Rockstar reclaimed its crown as the king of open-world gaming. Even when sat side-by-side with a PS4 running *inFamous*, all that extra horsepower can't come close to *GTA V*'s technical wizardry.



THE LONE WANDERER

Some may prefer the moment you emerged from the sewers in *Oblivion* or the journey up the Throat of the World in *Skyrim*, but for our money, leaving the safety of Vault 101 and stepping out onto the Capital Wasteland in *Fallout 3* is the defining open-world moment.



MIND, BODY AND SOULS

When it comes to size, *Dark Souls*' open-world is fairly modest. It doesn't rival a whole country in terms of exploration and you don't need a soul-powered Segway to get around. But what it lacks in extravagance, it more than makes up for with gritty personality.



△○×□ In order to make Gotham a more Batmobile-friendly place, Rocksteady has widened the streets from *Arkham City* to *Arkham Knight*.

superior to *Grand Theft Auto V* just because it's four times larger. Thankfully, the footage we've seen so far looks incredibly promising – particularly in regard to the hunting mechanic that reminds us of hunting solo in *Monster Hunter*.

Another open-world game that's planning to keep the focus firmly on the single-player is *Batman: Arkham Knight*. We've already explored the streets of Gotham in *Arkham City*, but with Rocksteady Studios throwing the Batmobile into the mix, the memorable driving sections from *Batman Returns* on the Mega-CD may have finally met their match. We're also keen to see what Yager Development can accomplish with the *Dead Island* series. The expectation is that *Dead Island 2* will be a fairly typical sequel, but if the Berlin-based developer can deliver a sobering dose of reality as it did with *Spec Ops: The Line*, it may amount to more than just another zombie game.

An open-world console game that lives up to the infamous *DayZ* mod for *ARMA II* will be the dream, but while it often feels like PC enthusiasts are the first to sample the latest open-world innovations (*Minecraft*, anyone?), the PlayStation 4 has both *Tom Clancy's The Division* and *No Man's Sky* on its release schedule. On first glance, the former looks like just another anti-terrorist mission where you toss flashbangs down a hallway, but upon closer inspection, it's revealed to be a hybrid of open-world, MMO, third-person shooter and RPG sensibilities where a deadly contagion has broken out in New York City. Colour us intrigued.

If there's one main trade-off with open-world design, it's the loss of focus. Rather than building a linear experience like a conventional book or film, a developer has to commit itself to a whole city, region or (if its name is Hello Games) universe. The best open-world games take a considerable amount of time and effort to bring up to standard and that's why the wait between the numbered *Grand Theft Auto* sequels is longer than most, and just because a virtual environment can be expressed in squared kilometres doesn't mean that its content measures up accurately to its dimensions. Ultimately, that's how the new generation of open-world games will be judged.

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Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls

The glorious grind begins anew



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Activision

DEVELOPER
Blizzard

PSN PRICE
Out Now

PLAYERS
1-4

AGE RATING
16+

TWITTER
@diablo

Trophies 44

1 2 17 24

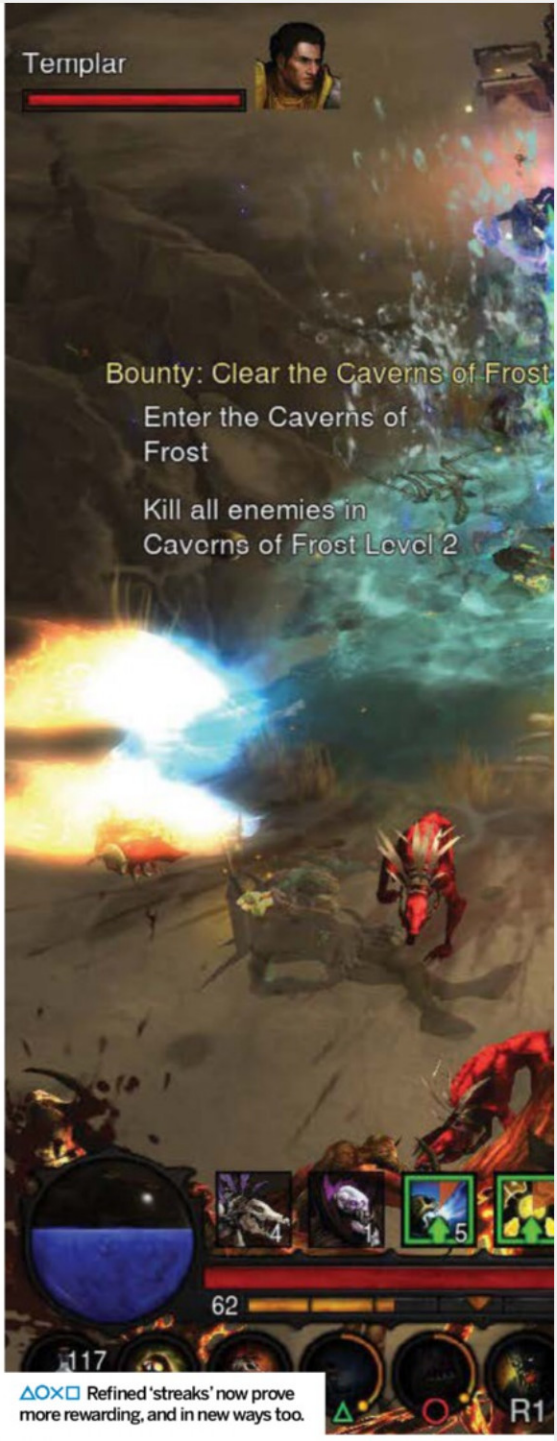
PS4
ALSO ON PS3

SO IT'S BEEN almost exactly a year since *Diablo III* came out on PS3, and guess what? It's still a bloody good game. It's not even like this is one of those remasters that some people have been getting so uppity about lately (better versions of amazing games like *The Last Of Us* and *Sleeping Dogs*, boo freaking hoo), as the PS4 version was announced at the same time as the console itself – it's just taken a while to get here. But be glad that it has, because what we have here is hands down the best version of the game on console, plus there's even an argument to be made for it being the best version of Blizzard's epic loot grind, period.

The *Reaper Of Souls* expansion is the main attraction here, particularly for those who have already sunk a little (or indeed too much) time into the vanilla game. Unlike most add-ons, this isn't just like a small new area to explore and a few new trinkets to snuffle up – coupled with the patches that have hit the PC version since launch, it's a game-wide upgrade to pretty much every mechanic with a brand new story Act, a new class and a wealth of new post-game content. We're not entirely sure what's 'evil' about it exactly (aside from the fact that it will rob you of *weeks* of your life once it sinks its claws in), but 'ultimate' was sure as hell the right choice of word.

After creating or importing a character, the first thing you'll notice is that the entire difficulty system has been completely overhauled. It's no longer designed to make you grind your way through each tier in sequence and enemies now scale to your level regardless of which you pick – they simply get stat modifiers that get more daunting the further up the ladder you dare to climb. Normal is a joke once you have anything close to a decent bank of skills and some nice gear, but Master mode and the multi-tiered Torment difficulties (there are six in total) present more plentiful elite enemies, each with a host of nasty skills and traits that will be the death of ill-prepared or poorly geared adventurers. With better rewards the more you push yourself, though, the incentive is always there to brave settings slightly beyond your capabilities, but be careful of having friends join your game as this spikes the difficulty something chronic.

The loot system has been totally redone as well, meaning you're more likely to find gear suitable for your current class and level. There'll still be the odd drop that you can't use but



△○×□ Refined 'streaks' now prove more rewarding, and in new ways too.



△○×□ Good luck beating this kill streak. We're pretty happy with it...

even these are far from useless – junk can be sold for cash, broken down for crafting components, stored in your Stash to be shared with your other characters or gifted to friends via the mail system. There's a lot of cool new social stuff like this, actually – legendary item drops have a chance to spawn an additional gift legendary for somebody on your friend list (they're name tagged and everything), while elite monsters that kill you have a chance to spawn in a friend's game. They'll keep powering up and terrorising your friends until somebody eventually takes them down, at which point all of their victims receive a celebratory reward. There's even a nod towards letting players of all levels party up, with a rebalanced experience and difficulty system allowing even new characters to jump into a game with a full team of maxed-out heroes and not be dead weight, under the right settings. This is a great shift as co-op is by far the best way to play, with both online

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"REAPER OF SOULS WILL ROB YOU OF WEEKS OF YOUR LIFE ONCE IT SINKS ITS CLAWS IN"

and local options and a huge boost in enemy mobs and difficulty to really set your screen exploding with colours and numbers. Honestly, it can be hard to keep up with what's going on at times.

For the hardcore, the most important addition of the lot is a proper endgame thanks to Adventure mode and the Nephalim Rifts, crushingly tough randomly generated dungeons where the best loot and the meanest enemies hide. New Bounty missions appear every time you return to explore the world in Adventure, completing these in turn granting access to the Rifts in an endless loop of loot hunting that proves to be pretty much the most addictive thing ever. Even once you've hit the raised level cap of 70, you can still be powering up your hero, too – the Paragon system lets you level way beyond the cap and pour skill points into whatever stats you choose, with Paragon levels shared between all of your level 70 characters, much like *Borderlands 2*'s Badass Rank.

Endless replayability is something that many games boast but few genuinely offer, and *Reaper Of Souls* can proudly count itself among this number.

Improved visuals, tighter controls, refined characters and the wealth of new content comfortably make this the best version of the game available and, if only due to the lack of any real competition, the best ARPG of its kind on PlayStation. Resign yourself to the fact that it's near impossible to stop playing and allow *Diablo III* to consume your soul – you're in for one hell of a ride.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

A comprehensive update to one of the best games in its class, *Reaper Of Souls* is an absolute must-play for anyone that likes loot. And what kind of crazy person doesn't like loot?

92%



△○×□ Bosses take a hell of a beating once you up the difficulty.



OR YOU COULD TRY △ **DESTINY** Fans of loot don't have much in the way of choice on PS4 right now, but you could do far worse than Bungie's new shooter for a random gear fix.



"DESPITE ITS PREPOSTEROUS PREMISE, GARDEN WARFARE IS SOME OF THE SILLIEST FUN YOU'LL HAVE ON YOUR PS4"

Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare

PopCap puts the fun into the squad-based shooter



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts

DEVELOPER
PopCap Games

PSN PRICE
£34.99

PLAYERS
1-24

AGE RATING
7+

TWITTER
@PlantsvsZombies

Trophies 41

1 3 9 28

PS4
ALSO ON PS3

WHEN EA FIRST announced it was turning PopCap's popular tower defence game into a third-person squad-based shooter, many assumed the publisher was making a joke, and a bad one at that. All you need to know is that despite its preposterous premise, *Garden Warfare* is some of the silliest fun you'll have on your PS4. Honest.

As with similar games, *Garden Warfare* has a class structure with each side featuring healers, snipers, heavy artillery and engineers. They're not strict mirrors though, meaning each race's classes will take a fair while to master. Initially you'll start off with fairly limited skills, and will be thrown various challenges, ranging from killing a specific plant type, to destroying an enemy with a particular weapon. The sheer variety of weaponry on offer is quite impressive while an amusing cutscene shows how to best use the ability in the field. Eventually you'll have access to three different skills at a time, each with their own cool-down meters. Cactus can lay potato mines or use drones to shoot enemies from afar, while zombie foot soldiers have jet-propelled jumps and dangerous missiles at their disposal. Weapons and challenges for each class feel well balanced, but it's a little too easy to unlock all the available goodies.

Speaking of which, there are all sorts of interesting things to discover in *Garden Warfare*. The coin currency is used to buy stickers, which grant a number of bonuses that range from respawns in certain game modes to additional plants and zombies and even new character skins. Pleasingly, all of this is free, with no option to buy packets with real money or any other type of microtransaction. Indeed, PopCap and EA should be commended for the amount of content that they have delivered.

Balanced character classes and cool unlockables mean nothing if the core gameplay is no good and sadly, this is where things start to slightly unravel. While PopCap has included a large number of game modes, not all of them are very good. The best is arguably Team Vanquish, which is your good old-fashioned deathmatch, with teams taking it in turns to play as the two races. Garden Ops is equally enjoyable, being a third-person version of the original tower defence game, or Horde Mode, as many will know it. The idea is to create a garden and then guard it from wave after wave of zombies. Plants can be planted in nearby pots to ward off the assault and up to three friends can join you. It's tough on your own and you'll eventually run out of plants, meaning you'll have to buy sticker packs to earn more. It's a lot of fun, although the boss fights do feel a little unbalanced against smaller teams.

The remaining modes are more of a mixed bunch, ranging from decent to decidedly average. Vanquish Confirmed has you collecting orbs from fallen opponents to boost your credit rating, while Gardens And Graveyards plays like a clunky cut-down version of *Battlefield*'s Rush Mode. Gnome Bomb, on the other hand, is quite amusing as you must detonate a gnome at specific bases, while fending off attacks from your opponents. It's silly fun highlighting that when *Garden Warfare* works, it works very well indeed.

The zaniness is further highlighted by *Garden Warfare*'s slick visuals. There's a loony child-like design to the locations, while the 2D characters of the original game look surprisingly great as 3D creations. Sure, the style isn't going

IN THIS SERIES

PLANTS VS ZOMBIES Although the PS3 version of this tower defence game is perfectly enjoyable, we prefer the Vita version thanks to its excellent touchscreen interface.





△○×□ It's a real shame that there aren't more maps, as some of the existing ones aren't that great.



△○×□ You won't get far going it alone, so find a group of friends in order to bring the hurt.

to appeal to everyone, but there's no denying that PopCap has nailed the atmosphere of its classic game.

It's a pity then that the maps – one of the game's most important components – are one of the weakest aspects. Many of them simply aren't interesting to play in and their bizarre setup across the various game modes mean you'll soon get tired of seeing the same few pop up over and over again. The huge focus on team-based play (there's no single-player campaign) and need for a constant online connection will no doubt put some off as well. Leave those prejudices behind though. *Garden Warfare* might not be perfect, but it's hellishly entertaining, and ultimately that's what really matters.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

It's crying out for a larger selection of maps and a few more top-tier game modes, but *Garden Warfare* remains highly entertaining all the same. A direct hit from PopCap Games.

71%

PS3 DIFFERENCES



FRAME RATE'S GREAT

The PS4 version runs at a silky smooth 60fps, while the PS3 concentrates on 30fps.

DOING THE SPLITS

You'll be able to play with a friend locally on PS4, but it's one-player only on one PS3.

VITA CONNECTION

Garden Warfare is playable remotely on your lovely PS Vita, provided you get the PS4 version...

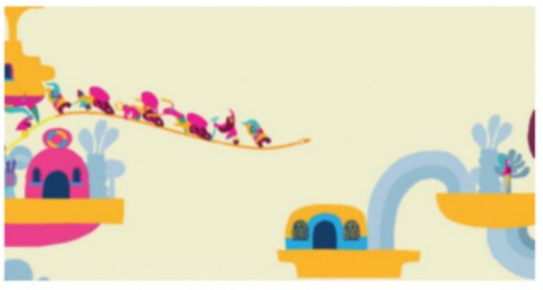
LIKE A BOSS

PlayStation 4 owners can use the PlayStation App to get mobile support for Boss Mode.



Hohokum

Snakes on a plain







DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony

DEVELOPER
Honeyslug

RELEASE DATE
Out Now

PSN PRICE
£9.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
7+

TWITTER
@KommanderKlobb

Trophies 12



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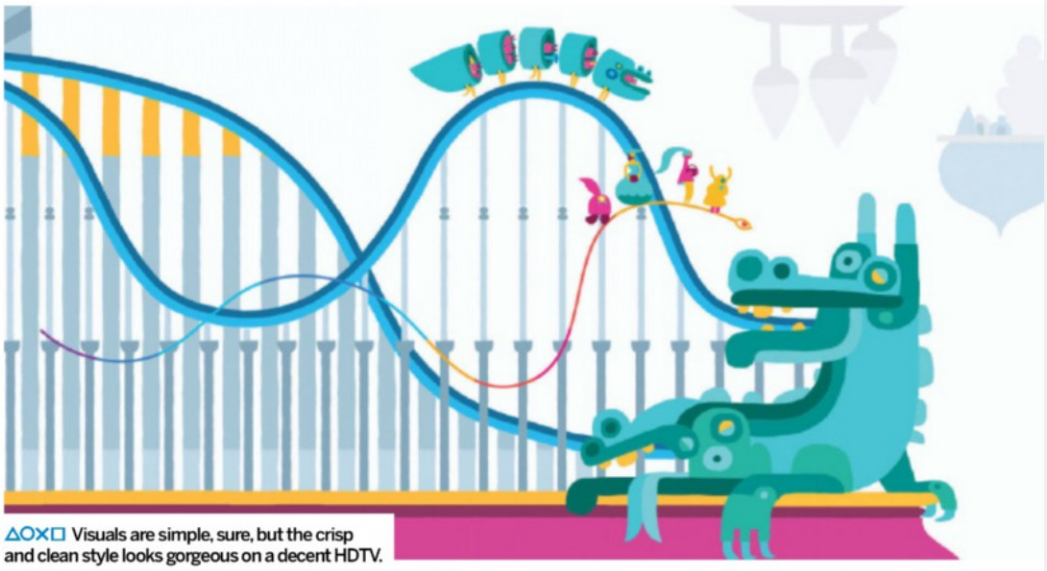
PS4

ALSO ON PS3 & VITA

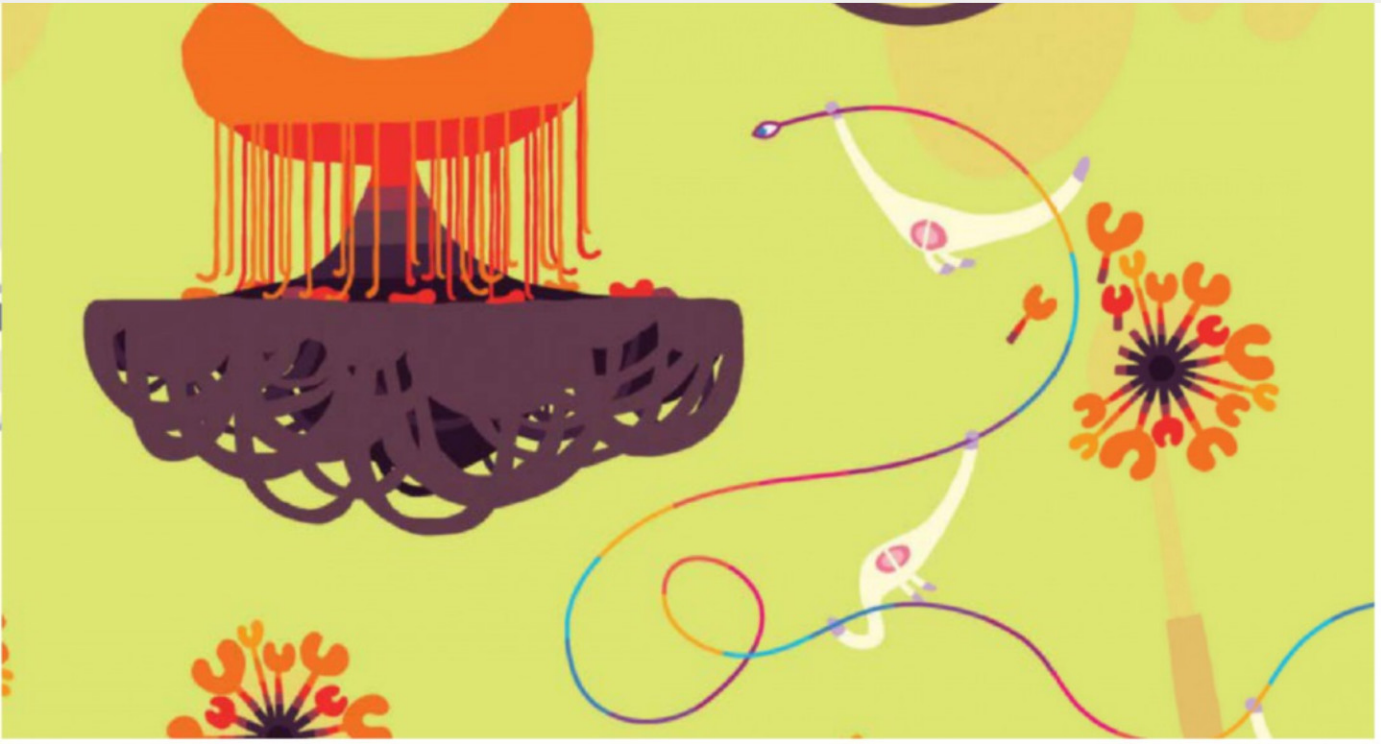
SOMEWHERE, IN A distant dystopian future, humanity's last hope is gearing up to defend what remains of the race against an alien menace we can't possibly comprehend. Meanwhile, in whatever cheese-before-bedtime dreamworld *Hohokum* is set, a rainbow snake with a single eye for a face is flying around, *doing stuff*, for some reason. Honeyslug's latest isn't your typical videogame, not by a long shot. There's no story per se, no comfortably familiar setting, no dialogue, no signposting and no real logical reason for anything you'll see or do to be happening. Nothing about it is standard, nothing obvious. And in truth, that's probably the game's strongest feature.

Controlling your colourful line (named the Long Mover – a *Mighty Boosh* reference, in case you were wondering) couldn't be simpler – steer with the stick, with a button to go faster and one to go slower. And that's pretty much it. Interaction with the environment comes down to either passing over, bumping into or encircling objects, meaning you'll find yourself literally banging your head against puzzles until you stumble upon the often-abstract solution. It reminds us of a lot of early point-and-click games in that respect – nobody really knows why taking the flying sausages to the sausage tree makes monkeys throw fruit at an elephant, but it does. Stuff like this makes experimentation key, but the world is so interesting that you'll want to try out as much crazy stuff as you can anyway, just to see what happens. Often, you'll be glad you did, even if what you get or trigger doesn't actually help you at all.

Thanks to these curious puzzles, the oddball cast of characters (if you can even call them that) and the trippy landscapes, this is a fascinating experience and one unlike any other in modern gaming. The closest comparison we can come up with is *Noby Noby Boy*, a similar concept in that you control an extending *thing* in a colourful freeform



△○×□ Visuals are simple, sure, but the crisp and clean style looks gorgeous on a decent HDTV.





△○×□ Thankfully, this fanged elephant thing is nowhere near as aggressive as it looks. It did have us worried for a while, though...

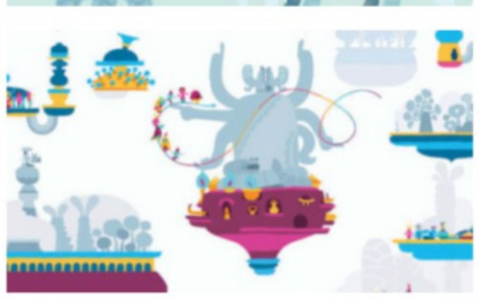


△○×□ We can't think of another game in which this would happen.





△○×□ The dreamy music complements the style perfectly.



playground but in bringing up the *Katamari* creator's PS3 oddity, we seem to have accidentally found the one game on the market that *Hohokum* actually has a more defined structure than. There *are* goals here, primarily rescuing a cast of snake friends and opening eyes hidden in the various backdrops, but the reasons and methods are far less clear. It's an oddly relaxing game too, largely due to the lack of any kind of threat and the lovely soundtrack – just mooching around in areas we'd already 'finished' one evening, we almost found ourselves dozing off to this psychedelic lullaby.

While it doesn't quite test the grey matter to the same degree as something like *Fez*, those who couldn't get their heads around the map in Phil Fish's puzzle opus are likely to flip out at *Hohokum* – different areas are linked via portals and with no map (and some doors being one-way trips), you need to memorise where you've been and where each leads else you'll just get caught in some frustrating loop or another. Being able to see a glimpse of the next area through each portal is useful, but quite a few look similar to one another, which can prove irritating if there's a particular place you need to be. To be fair, the journey is actually part of the experience, although nobody wants to loop through the same couple of stages over and over. There's no quicker way for something to lose its magic than to be exposed to it too much, after all.

But perhaps that's to overanalyse *Hohokum*. This isn't a game that exists to show off its clever mechanics, nor to offer the usual flow of gameplay many players expect from modern games so it isn't really fair to judge it in the same way. It's very much an art game, a peerless experience and the gaming world's first glimpse of what it might be like to be a technicolour flying worm thing exploring a world that doesn't make much sense. Yes, it's quite strange. But if you fancy something a little different to the usual gaming fare, *Hohokum* couldn't be further removed from the norm and it's all the better for it. It'll be too weird, too arty and too meandering for some, sure. But those who enter with an open mind are likely to come away glad that some developers don't like to play by the rules. Some just want to make games about magical flying space worms. And that's just fine with us.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

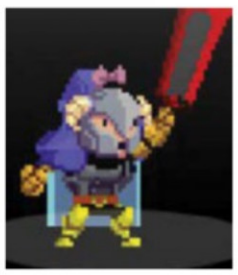
A curious, colourful adventure that is unlike anything you've ever played before. It'll be too abstract for some, but give it a chance – it's an experience you won't forget in a hurry.

80%

FOR FANS OF... **NOBY NOBY BOY** There's nothing else quite like *Hohokum*, but this PS3 curio is about as close as it gets.

Rogue Legacy

If you tolerate this, your children will be next



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Cellar Door Games

DEVELOPER
Cellar Door Games

PSN PRICE
£9.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
12+

TWITTER
@CellarDoorGames

Trophies 30

1 4 5 20

PS4

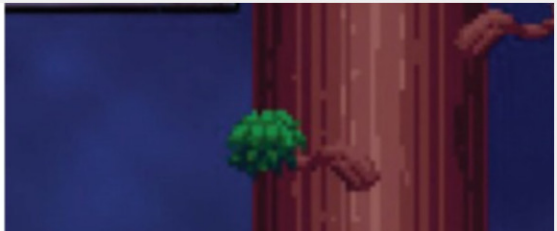
ALSO ON PS3 & VITA

DYSLEXIC MINER, FLATULENT mage or overweight ninja? Difficult decisions like this come at the start of every venture into *Rogue Legacy*'s ever-changing castle, the choice of who will succeed your last fallen hero easily the most important you'll make in your entire run. But no matter which gimped or gifted successor you pick or what horrible variant of the castle you end up in, one thing remains constant – each new generation is in for as rough a time as the last. And what a wonderful living nightmare that is.

If you've ever played a classic *Castlevania* game, you'll have a fair idea of what to expect here. And if not, go play *Symphony Of The Night* right this second. You're welcome. Unlike those games, though, *Rogue Legacy*'s castle and grounds are randomly generated every time you enter – we've not seen anything quite as unfair as some of the procedural stages *Spelunky* coughs up from time to time but still, don't expect to be able to reach every single room or chest on any given run. Certain paths can only be reached by small characters, for instance, while some loot can only be reached if you happen to enter with the right set of runes equipped. The early stages of the game can be tough as a result, particularly if the random room placement ends up funnelling you into tough areas before you've had a chance to improve your stats or grab much new gear. But a few generations in, you should start to spot the warning signs that can help avoid a grisly fate.

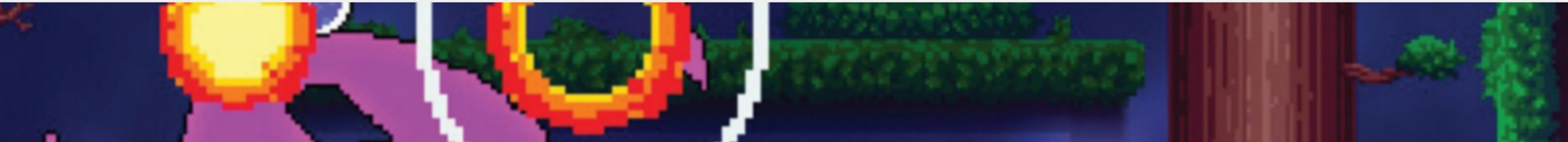
Sure, with no limit on play cycles, you *can* just send generation after doomed generation to their deaths, banging your head against the game until you eventually make some progress. But to do so is to miss the point of a game like this really – it's more effective and way more satisfying to take your time and master the mechanics until you can speedrun anything the castle throws your way in your sleep. The game's toughest Trophy, 'Thanatophobia', will only be unlocked by those who can claim the latter, demanding that you start from scratch and bring down the last boss within 15 generations. Unlocking this is a metagame all of its own, since it requires perfect planning and execution as well as a fair bit of luck – it perfectly encapsulates the cruel hardcore heart of the game and how brutal it can be when you strip back all the accessibility aids and the ability to grind your way to victory.

With *Rogue Legacy* placing so much pressure on the player to perform, it's just as well that the mechanics are suitably tight. The possibility for air dashes and multi-jumps makes finding your optimum mobility level key, while these and other techniques (including the handy plunging attack) can be chained so that pros can dart through even the toughest of rooms – which, on NG+ and beyond, can descend into bullet hell horror – without a scratch. It's tough, especially as you begin to venture outside the relative safety of the castle walls. But it's also incredibly



△○×□ Bosses aren't too tricky once you get their patterns. The new Hard mode ones, though? Ouch.





"IF YOU'VE EVER PLAYED A CLASSIC CASTLEVANIA GAME, YOU'LL HAVE A FAIR IDEA OF WHAT TO EXPECT HERE"





satisfying to smash your way through a crowded room and emerge in one piece, or to accidentally enter a boss chamber while horribly injured yet still manage to dodge, leap and counter your way to victory. The more likely outcome is that you'll get smashed to bits and have to find the boss again in an all-new castle, but that's all part of the learning experience. Dust yourself off and send your next of kin back in to avenge you, and the cycle begins anew.

Sony seems to be getting a fair bit of flak for the ratio of 'old-fashioned' indie games to high profile new releases on PS4, but it's really not fair. Triple-A games take longer to create than ever and as long as the indie output that tides us over between big releases can maintain the quality displayed by the likes of *Fez*, *Resogun* and *Transistor*, we can't see the problem – a good game is a good game, whether it's made by two people or 2,000. *Rogue Legacy* comfortably sits alongside those greats we just mentioned as one of the finest downloadable PS4 games to date, a true test of skill and one that can be enjoyed almost endlessly thanks to the way the castle twists and changes every time you return. It's frankly amazing that a game where 99 per cent of runs end in failure can be this enjoyable, but that's kind of the point – you play, you die and then your messed-up kids follow in your footsteps. Until the end of time. And you'll love every agonising minute.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

A gruelling dungeon quest where every death is just the beginning of a brand new adventure. Already one of our most-played PS4 games this year, *Rogue Legacy* is absolutely superb.

91%

www.play-mag.co.uk



CounterSpy

Blunt, James Blunt



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony

DEVELOPER
Dynamighty

PSN PRICE
£9.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
1.4 GB

AGE RATING
16

TWITTER
@Dynamighty

Trophies 14



PS4

ALSO ON PS3 & VITA

WHILE IT BILLS itself as a stealth game, it rarely feels as if *CounterSpy* has been expressly designed with that fact in mind. Even when it doesn't transform into an unsatisfying and awkward shooter – as it does far too often – there's a sense of sloppiness about *CounterSpy*'s stealth mechanics and a lack of clarity about how enemies will respond to the player's actions.

This is a game that at least has some interesting ideas, though. Using an irreverent Cold War-inspired setting as its basis, *CounterSpy* asks the player to choose where they'd like to undertake each mission – in the Imperialist West or the Communist East. You have to weigh up a number of factors in making that decision. Some missions will contain more of the intel that you'll need to collect to unlock the game's final mission, others have more weapon parts for new guns, or formulas that provide you with perks that can be utilised in later missions. Then there's the DEFCON rating for each faction. Being spotted by enemies and cameras can lead to the DEFCON level being raised, so you'll have to monitor each faction's DEFCON rating and, when appropriate, take on missions that contain officers, who will lower the DEFCON level when forced to surrender. Being able to influence the course of your campaign in such a way, to decide what your priorities are, control the game's pacing and make judgements about the level of risk you're willing to accept adds a layer of strategy that, while perhaps a little superficial, genuinely enriches the experience of playing *CounterSpy*.

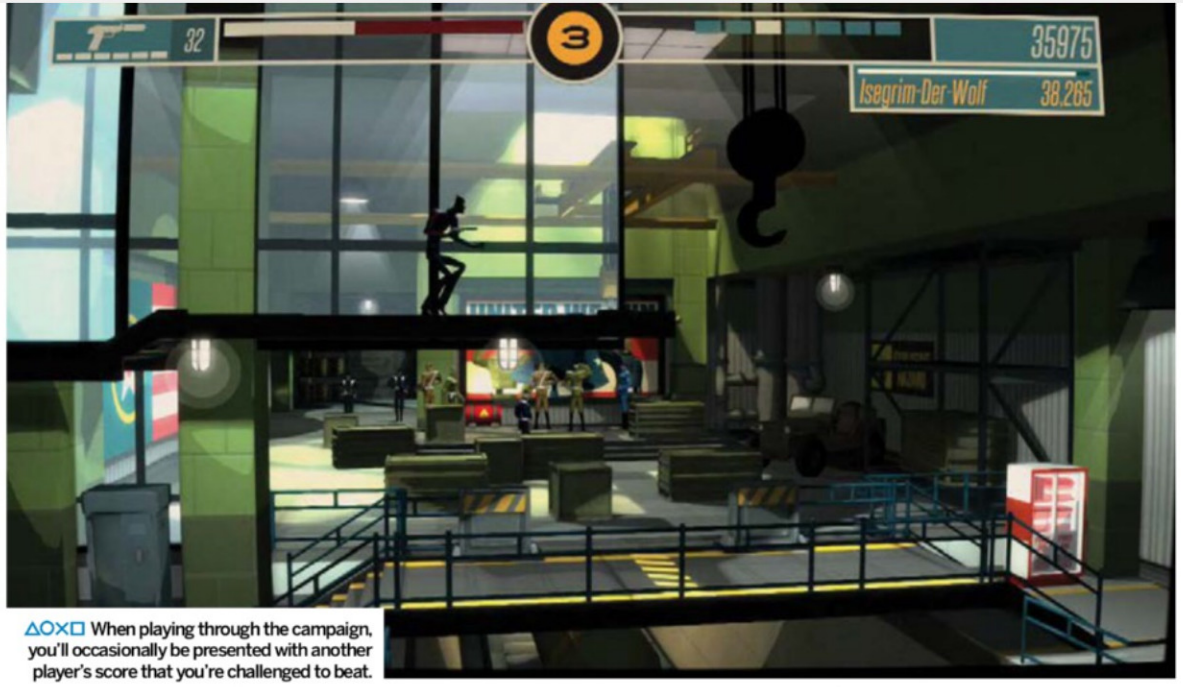
When it comes to undertaking your missions, you're plonked into a 2.5D environment, pleasingly rendered in a cartoon style. The objective is to get from one end to the other whilst keeping the DEFCON level as low as possible (though if you want to make any real progress, you'll have to explore the level to collect the aforementioned intel and upgrades to be found along the way). This will involve making use of familiar stealth tools in order



△○×□ We really wish that *CounterSpy*'s gameplay was as good as its beautiful stylised visuals...

www.imagineshop.co.uk





△○×□ When playing through the campaign, you'll occasionally be presented with another player's score that you're challenged to beat.



"THE VARIETY OFFERED BY THE GAME'S 'RANDOM GENERATION' IS SOMETHING OF A MISNOMER"





to achieve your goal – sneaking, silent takedowns, headshots and so on. It's also periodically necessary to snap into cover, at which point the player's perspective shifts onto another plane (hence 2.5D). While it's possible to take out a few enemies without being spotted in these situations, they invariably turn into shooting galleries, which is unfortunate, given that describing them as such makes them sound far more exciting than they actually are.

These sections are perhaps necessary, though, to ensure that an experience that is fundamentally lacking in terms of depth compensates with variety. That same motivation is presumably behind *CounterSpy*'s protestation that its levels are randomly generated. It won't take you long to realise that what that means, in this case, is sticking together the same series of rooms in a slightly different order. You'll quickly recognise patterns that you've seen before and, in that sense, the variety offered by the game's 'random generation' is something of a misnomer. The same can be said of the upgrades that can be collected throughout the game. There are one or two weapons and perks that change things up a little, but none shake up the game's core mechanics in a way that's truly surprising or innovative.

△○×□ Once guards know you're there, you can't leave them behind. They'll eventually radio HQ, raising the DEFCON level.

CounterSpy is a game with some notable weaknesses, then, but that doesn't mean that it's never fun. There are moments of enjoyment to be gleaned from swiftly taking out a group of enemies with minimal fuss, satisfaction to be gained from successfully stripping a level of all its secrets and some pleasing pondering to be undertaken as you choose how to approach the game's campaign. *CounterSpy* fails to elicit those positive reactions frequently enough, though. Consequently, it never manages to peek its head above mediocrity.

Paul Walker-Emig



TROPHY CABINET

SUPER SPY If you're going to complete a mission unseen, we'd highly recommend unlocking a silenced weapon.



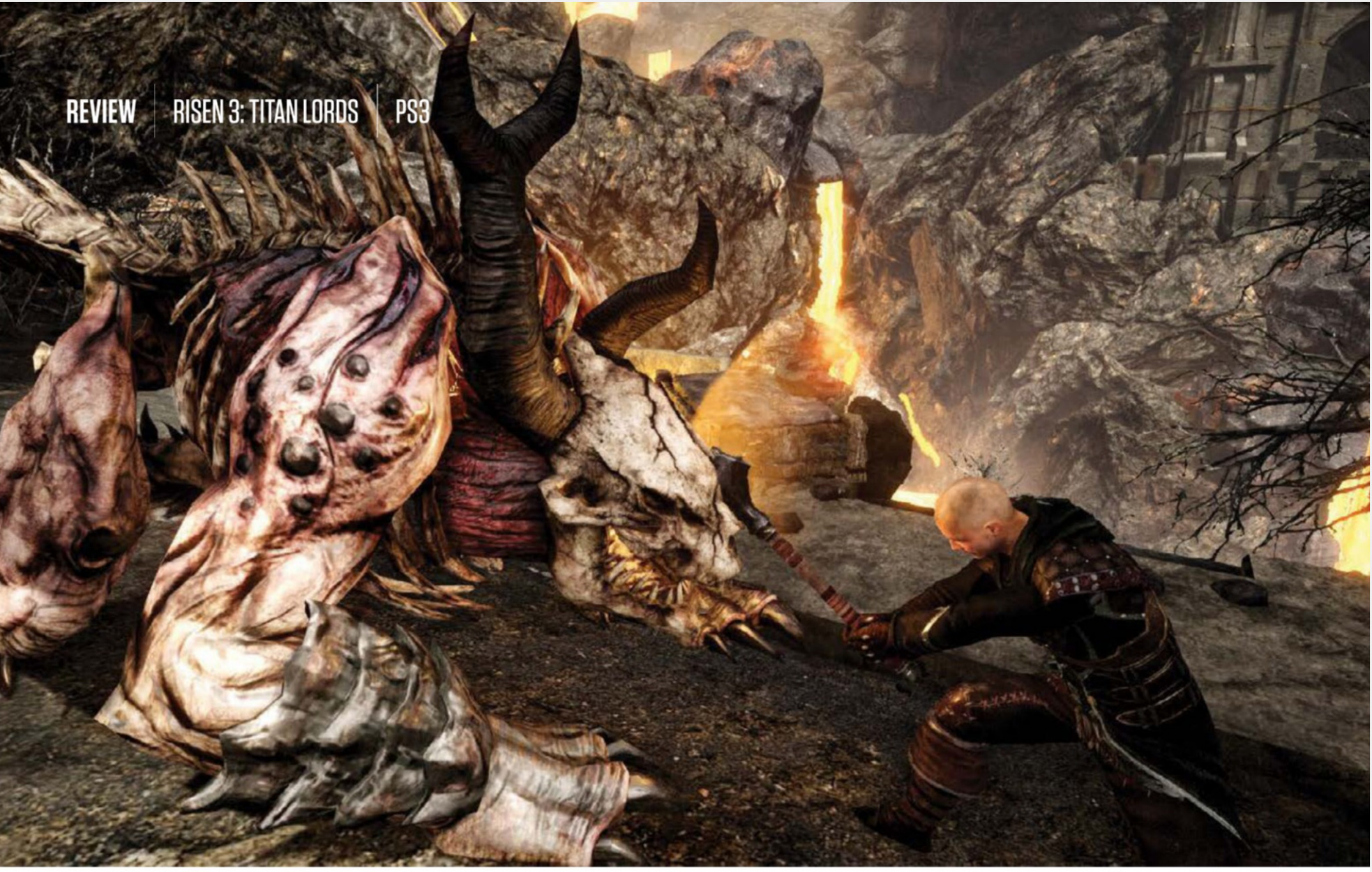
LOAD EM UP Make sure you scour every stage for hidden areas to get as much cash and as many unlocks as possible.

VERDICT

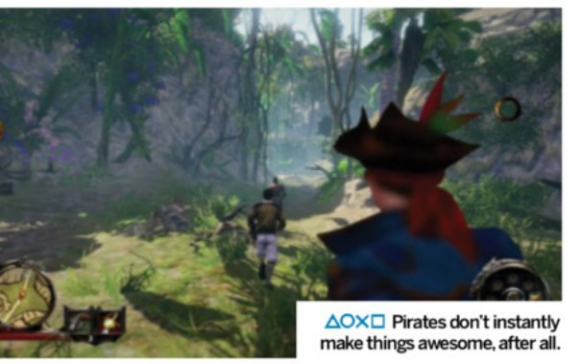
Hampered by inconsistency and a lack of depth, *CounterSpy* ends up being painfully average, though it does at least have some good ideas, particularly its player-controlled campaign pacing.

50%

OR YOU COULD TRY **ODDWORLD: NEW 'N' TASTY** If you want to play a 2D platformer with stealth in it, you'd be far better served picking up Just Add Water's excellent remake of *Abe's Oddysee*.







△○×□ Pirates don't instantly make things awesome, after all.



Risen 3: Titan Lords

A scurvy-ridden mess

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Deep Silver

DEVELOPER
Piranha Bytes

PSN PRICE
£39.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
4.3 GB

AGE RATING
16

TWITTER
@RisenTicker

Trophies 51

1 3 5 42

PS3

WHAT IS THE point of a game like *Risen 3*? We don't say that to be nasty – it's a genuine question. There is hardly a shortage of Western fantasy-RPGs on the market, and with such great games as *Skyrim* on shelves and *The Witcher 3* on the way, what purpose do titles like *Risen 3* serve? Coming from small German developer Piranha Bytes, it's a series that has always done okay in its native land and eastern Europe, but not so well in the rest of the world. Why is that?

Well, for lack of a better term, they are janky as all hell. It doesn't always feel good to rip apart games from small, struggling developers, but we have to judge these things objectively, and *Risen 3* just isn't a good game.

A lot of this comes from the fact that the PS3 version is utterly horrendous. Piranha Bytes is a PC developer, and from what we've seen, *Risen 3* both looks and runs far better on a decent computer. Unfortunately, we aren't reviewing the PC version, and what we are left with is one of the worst ports we've seen in a long time.

To say *Risen 3* on PS3 is ugly to is give it too much credit. It looks, at times, like a PS2 game, and a poor one at that. Lighting effects will frequently disappear and reappear with slight movements of the camera, textures and entire environmental elements regularly pop in at extremely close range and the frame rate is abysmal. Occasionally, elements of character models simply don't seem to exist, which led to us at one point controlling someone without hips. It was really quite disturbing.

The opening scene, meant to be an exciting battle aboard a pirate ship joined partway through, is an utter mess, characters clipping in and out as the

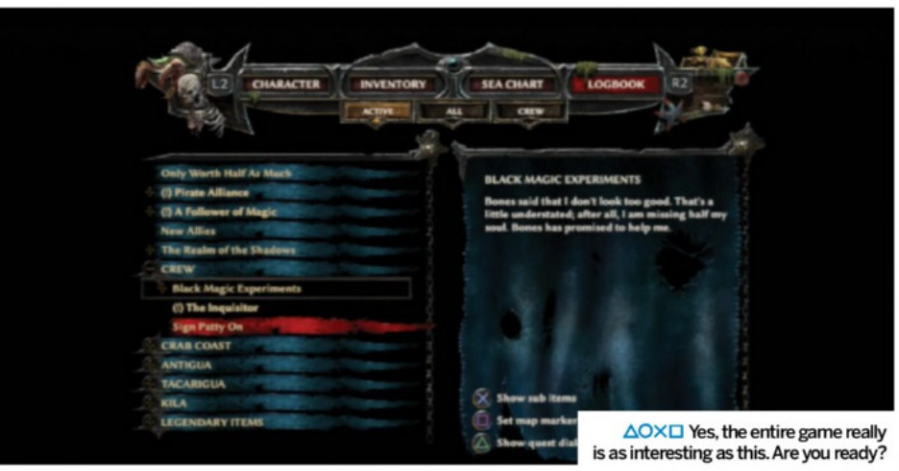


△○×□ Considering that *The Witcher 3* is out in a few months, this looks like even more of a mess.



△○×□ Character models are pretty poor, but animation is even worse.





△○×□ Yes, the entire game really is as interesting as this. Are you ready?

"WHAT WE ARE LEFT WITH IS ONE OF THE WORST PORTS WE'VE SEEN IN A LONG TIME"

whole thing barely holds itself together. The setting raises another interesting point – the game has been marketed as a departure from the pirate themes of *Risen 2*, which is nonsense. You begin the game as a pirate and spend a majority of it exploring Caribbean-style islands... like a pirate. It's obviously not a bad thing, so we can't help but wonder why the people in marketing felt the need to hide it.

Of course, all the bad graphics and terrible frame rates in the world don't matter if a game is fun to play, but *Risen 3* unfortunately fails in that regard too. The basic combat system is utterly awful, totally broken and often left up to chance. It's basic stuff: press X to attack, hold it to charge a more powerful move, Square to dodge and hold R2 to block. The wind-up animations on your attacks are huge, leading to every move feeling sluggish and unresponsive, and you'll often be attacked before your swing finishes. Blocking and waiting for an opening is pointless, as enemies attack at random with no way to read their next move. Once you do hit, your enemy is often stun-locked enough for you to finish them with an endless string of button presses, their health slowly going down as time ticks away. It's rubbish.

Get further into the game and you'll eventually unlock magic powers, and while these make things easier, they don't make them any more fun. You'll have had to sit through hours and hours of awful melee combat to get to this point, so it's not much recompense.

Despite all this, there is a ton of content on offer. After the intro you are left relatively free to explore as you like, and talking to everyone will see a constant stream of quests being unlocked and completed. Unfortunately, utterly abysmal voice acting mars much of this dialogue, so you'll often find yourself skipping through it. Still, it can't be denied how large the world is, or how much there is to do in it. Playing on a PC, where the game runs well and you might be able to mod the atrocious combat, there could be some fun to be had with *Risen 3*. But on PS3, there is almost nothing to recommend it for. With a variety of far superior fantasy-RPGs out there, you simply never need to play this.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

One of the worst ports we've ever played, *Risen 3* is a ugly, buggy mess on PS3 that, when added to the awful combat, results in a poor game. A shame, as there are hints of potential.

25%

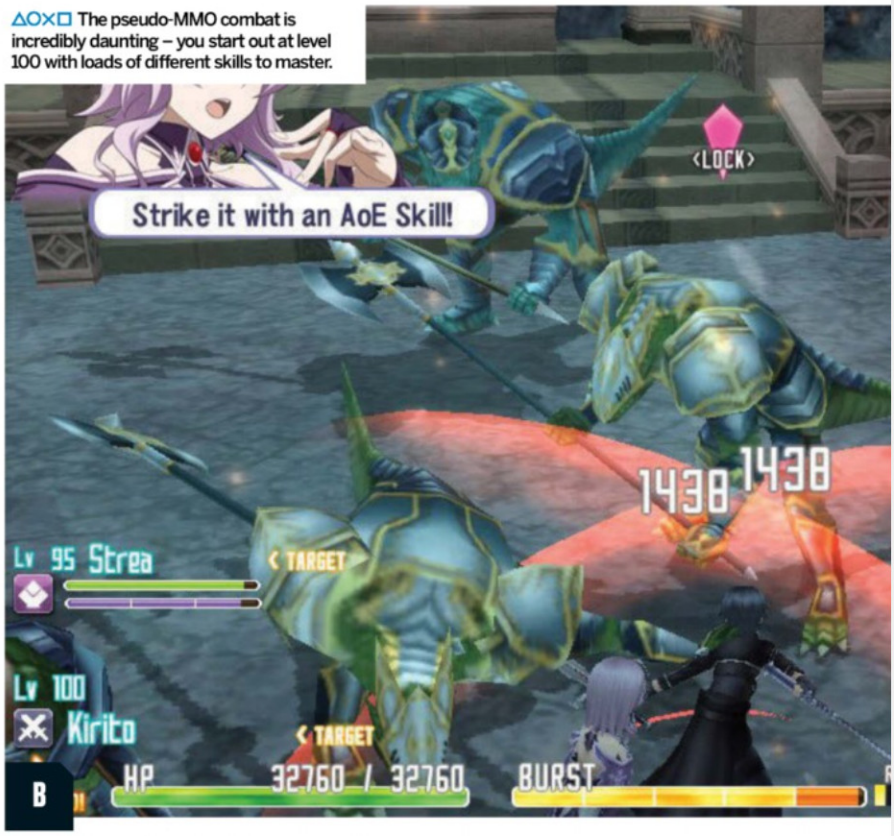
OR YOU COULD TRY △ **THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM**
Another open-world fantasy RPG, except one that isn't rubbish.

REVIEW ROUND-UP

AS LONG AS this section exists, we're pretty sure that it'll never again feature so disparate a selection of games as that which we have in store for you this month. A psychological puzzle-platformer; a pretend MMO; an HD remaster of two famously quite good shooters; a handheld port of a revered tactics RPG; a golf game, about golf. There's literally not even a single thread that ties these games together, but perhaps there doesn't need to be – a good game is a good game, regardless of genre.

And **DISGAEA 4: A PROMISE REVISITED [A]** is a good game, even if it's a good game we already played before on PS3. It's an absolutely perfect fit for Vita though, the bite-size strategy-RPG battles perhaps even better suited for a handheld than they were for console in the original version. The wealth of new content and upgrades makes the decision to head back into the game even easier and while we'll famously play anything with Prinnies in, NIS has done an amazing job of ensuring this is the definitive version of its strategy-RPG. Tweaks from *Disgaea D2* make for a far more complete experience, and the inclusion of all the PS3 DLC (and that's quite a lot) as well as a new tier of magic and loads of additional scenarios certainly doesn't hurt either. The Item World (where you treat equipment as dungeons and level it up by venturing deeper into the randomly-generated dungeon tiers) is basically a game in itself – this is comfortably the Vita's strongest SRPG and it's going to take some beating.

△○×□ The pseudo-MMO combat is incredibly daunting – you start out at level 100 with loads of different skills to master.



"DISGAEA 4 IS COMFORTABLY THE VITA'S STRONGEST STRATEGY RPG AND IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME BEATING"

Conversely, **SWORD ART ONLINE: HOLLOW FRAGMENT [B]** has already been bested from a gameplay perspective – it's far from the first game to riff on the *Monster Hunter* format and it sure as hell won't be the last, but it sticks so closely to the light novels and anime as to be borderline impenetrable for anyone out of the loop. The main gimmick here is to mimic MMO mechanics but just as the *.hack* series failed in this respect a decade ago, *SAO* does equally poorly today. It's great fan service for people that love the anime, sure, but that simply doesn't translate into good gameplay – it's hard to make sense of even the basic commands without a translator on hand, and even then, sitting through the pages and pages of dialogue is, frankly, pointless unless you're already invested in the characters.

THE SWAPPER [C], meanwhile, places way more investment in your own character, this sci-fi puzzle-platformer happy to watch you clone yourself ad nauseum in order to get through a tough room while challenging

△○×□ If you're not prepared to put 100+ hours into *Disgaea*, it's probably best to stay away. As great as it is, it's also a serious time sink.









the very mechanics it demands. This is a far darker game than anything else in its field and while the most puzzles may not be all that tough, there's a message at the core of this experience that can't help but resonate through the seemingly simple solutions. Every clone you create is/was a real person and though they help you reach your goal, questions will inevitably be asked about the ethical (or otherwise) nature of the solutions you reach.

Meanwhile, **METRO REDUX [D]** would probably like to think that it's presenting such poignant existential quandaries when in actual fact, it's just an HD remaster of two decent (and, to be fair, pretty creative) shooters from the last generation. The remaster job is a really good one too, rivalling







the PC version in terms of visuals while offering the ability to play the two games with either the default mechanics or those of the other game. Whichever you pick, the tunnels and wastelands look amazing on PS4 and it's crazy how much this makes them feel like better games – they're clearly focused on atmosphere and this was never fully achieved on PS3, whereas being able to pick out every last detail as you scrabble for your life at the end of the world is terrifying here.

Far less scary, though, is **THE GOLF CLUB [E]**, largely because you don't really have much to fear from polite people in beige slacks even if they are brandishing long metal poles. Don't expect *Tiger Woods* production values here, but the game is a sterling example of how that doesn't matter one bit if the gameplay holds up. And it does, thankfully – with the *Tiger* games slipping



△○×□ The mutated beasties are arguably the best thing about *Metro*, and they're even more gruesome in full 1080p.



further and further from the greatness they achieved close to a decade ago, the stage is set for a usurper to steal the crown and with the right push, that usurper could just be *The Golf Club*. It plays really well and has a lot of the same kind of social features you're going to see in *Driveclub*, with stats charted against those of friends to turn every shot into a competition. You don't have to worry about a lack of courses or having to shell out for DLC holes, either – a course editor allows you to create and share your dream 18 holes, meaning you'll never go hungry for green places to do a golf on ever again. Praise be.

△○×□ It's a po-faced take on the sport, sure, but that's what a lot of golf fans want. We certainly don't miss any of that EA Trax nonsense...





PUBLISHER EIDOS INTERACTIVE | **DEVELOPER** CRYSTAL DYNAMICS | **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION

RELEASE DATE 16 AUGUST 1999 | **PLAY SCORE** 92% | **METACRITIC SCORE** 91/100

The Making Of... LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

It was the game that developed many of the techniques that would go on to be employed in both Uncharted and The Last Of Us. John Robertson speaks to senior designer Richard Lemarchand about what made Soul Reaver so special



Did you know that 1999 was the year that the Euro currency launched? It's the also the year that Glenn Hoddle was sacked as England manager and the London Eye was unveiled. A year of new ideas and new beginnings in the face of the new millennium.

New ideas and new beginnings is exactly what characterises *Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver*. The game launched late in the summer of the 1999, bringing with it a host of revolutionary design and production processes that would go on to become best practice for the industry going forward. It brought a new maturity to the action game, a genre that had up until that point been predominantly dominated by games overtly aimed at children and teenagers.

Here was something not only mature, but literary and thought-provoking; a game that featured violence and conflict, but backed it up with a narrative and characters that harboured genuine engagement and depth. It's the kind of game that grows in your mind even when you're not playing it, each interlinking thread becoming more meaningful as you meditate on it. Interestingly, however, what we now know *Soul Reaver* to be actually started life as *Shifter*, a game loosely based upon the themes of John Milton's poem *Paradise Lost*. *Soul Reaver*'s senior designer Richard Lemarchand explains.

"I wasn't actually on the project during its *Shifter* incarnation," he tells us. "I believe that concept was something Amy Hennig [director/writer] came up with while working with Seth Carus [designer/writer]. From what I understood from talking with them about *Shifter*, it was very close to the game that *Soul Reaver* eventually became."

Shifter was based upon the idea that there existed two different realms, the

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△○×□ Kain is the primary antagonist of *Soul Reaver* and the final boss that you must face as Raziel.

material and the spectral, and that a tortured protagonist could move between them. That protagonist was written as a fallen angel of death, a victim of injustice with tattered, humbled wings now hunted by his peers and former allies. All of these ideas would make it into *Soul Reaver* in the form of playable character Raziel and his ability to shift between planes of existence.

"I think the guys were somewhat inspired by the light and dark worlds in *Zelda: A Link To The Past*," continues Lemarchand, when probed about the concept's origins. "Amy and I are on record as saying it's one of our favourite games of all time. The idea was that you could move between these two worlds (planes) that would have structural connections, but would have unique sets of attributes that you could use in mechanical ways to draw out the story. Aside from the narrative re-skinning when the game took on its *Legacy Of Kain* mantle, there weren't fundamental changes to what was originally designed as *Shifter*."

The plane-shifting mechanic is core to the experience *Soul Reaver* delivers, providing not only aesthetic and thematic diversity but forcing you to take into account an added dimension when trying to solve a puzzle or traverse the world. Creating this level of complexity on the original PlayStation's hardware was no easy task.

"Both technologically and artistically it was very challenging," explains Lemarchand. "Although, in my memory, the plane-shifting mechanic came together quite early in production... I wasn't the one that had to program it, though!" he laughs.

"Something that really drew me to the plane shifting was its connections to – and I hope this doesn't sound overly pretentious – German Expressionist cinema. Amy was very clear about her inspirations, especially when it came to *The Cabinet Of Dr Caligari* (a key German Expressionist movie). You only have to look at Cesare from that movie to see the connection to Raziel: the sunken eyes, the Robert Smith haircut, the scarf around his mouth and neck."

"WITH A SINGLE DECISION, WE DOUBLED THE AMOUNT OF WORK"



Cesare wasn't the only inspiration from the movie; however, the odd angles that existed across its sets and backdrops served as further artistic fuel for *Soul Reaver*'s spectral plane. "What was vertical and horizontal in the material plane would become diagonal in the spectral plane," continues Lemarchand. "In cinema, that is a very classic way of heightening the psychological tension and recreating the feeling of being in a dream or a nightmare.

"That was very hard to get right. It's one thing to change the lighting from white and yellow in the material plane to a spectrum of blues in spectral plane, but it's another thing to find ways of deforming the ground, the walls and the architecture so that it looks sufficiently different. With a single design decision, we doubled the amount of work."

Soul Reaver's visual impact is just one of its strengths. Equally impactful is its approach to sound, the team dedicating themselves to implementing processes that were far from commonplace at the

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know in five facts



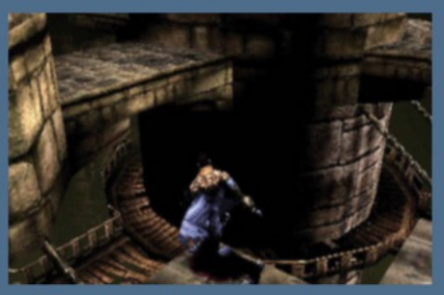
1 Amy Hennig and Richard Lemarchand went on to create the *Uncharted* games.



2 *Soul Reaver* began as *Shifter*, a game about a fallen angel that can travel between realms.



3 Michael Bell, the voice of Raziel, also acted in *Diablo*, *Metal Gear Solid* and *Warcraft*.



4 Many of the game's themes are taken from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the epic 17th Century poem.



5 While it shares the same name, it is not a direct sequel to *Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain*.



△○×□ All of the character design is still awesome today. Good luck rendering this guy on PSone, mind.



△○×□ It may not look so impressive today, but at the time *Soul Reaver*'s animation was genuinely outstanding and among the best seen on the PSone.

STANDOUT MOMENT



Writing the conflict

No one is simply 'good' or 'evil'

Due to the excellence of the writing throughout, it's pretty difficult to pick a single best moment within *Soul Reaver*. The opening sequence, with its expert telling of a lengthy and complicated backstory of the events to come, is a prime example of this. Not only does this section draw us into the world and its primary characters, but it forces us to question their motives and morals, creating a world that is not confined to the simplicity of 'good versus evil'. It's this intrigue surrounding complex characters that remains core to *Soul Reaver*'s appeal.

FURTHER READING



OLDER – Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain
Playing *Blood Omen* again is interesting because it demonstrates just how much a branded series can change from one game to the next.



NEWER – Uncharted
Many of the elements that started life in *Soul Reaver* would go on to inform and develop the *Uncharted* series, helping it attain its revered status.

time. Shamefully, many of these processes remain underused today. As Lemarchand explains, audio design is paramount to providing the player with the strongest experience possible.

"Historically, videogames have been very orientated towards the visuals and less towards the audio. That's a big mistake when you're trying to create an emotional experience. They say the visuals go in through the eyes and impact your rational and intellectual understanding, but the audio goes in through the ears and somehow gets routed straight to your heart. Just as in a movie soundtrack, you understand what's happening because of what is going on on-screen... but you feel the way that you do because of what you're hearing."

Soul Reaver featured an adaptive audio system that was among the very first of its kind, allowing the music to change depending on events the player is encountering and interacting with during gameplay. Nowadays, this kind of thing is standard in character-driven games, but during *Soul Reaver*'s development in 1998-1999 it was almost unheard of. This approach to sound design led to constant discussion with the game's audio team, with everyone encouraged to throw in their own ideas.

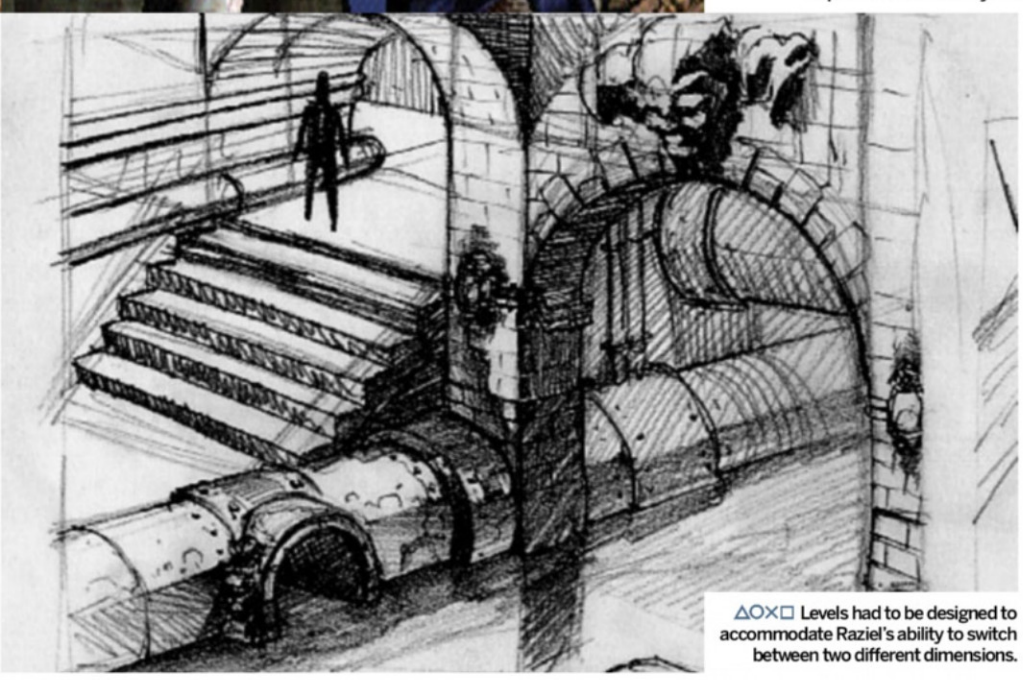


"As a designer, I always work as closely as possible with the audio people on any project I am on," Lemarchand goes on. "That collaboration on *Soul Reaver* was more intense than any that had preceded it. We would constantly be in each other's cubes and offices, talking not just audio but about the overall design of the game. I'm a big believer as a game designer that everyone on the team is a game designer. In design, everything matters.

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△○×□ *Soul Reaver*'s detailed gothic environments we some of the most impressive on PSone by far.



△○×□ Levels had to be designed to accommodate Raziel's ability to switch between two different dimensions.



NOT A SEQUEL...

But Soul Reaver was not the first Legacy Of Kain

Soul Reaver might have been marketed as a sequel to Silicon Knights' *Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain*, but in reality very little inspiration was taken from it. Richard Lemarchand explains.

"Because we were a completely different team, other than Amy Hennig and Seth Carus who had worked on *Blood Omen*, I think we did feel that we had a completely different and unique identity," he tells us. "Of course, the characters of *Soul Reaver* are drawn from *Blood Omen*. But in terms of the origin of the themes, the plot of the story and the game mechanics, we were starting with a completely blank page."

There's no detail in something that you're making that does not in some way impact the audience."

This design philosophy extended to how *Soul Reaver* used and recorded the voices of its actors. Hennig and Lemarchand would go on to design and direct all three of the PlayStation 3's *Uncharted* games, but it was on *Soul Reaver* that they developed many of the practices that would help bring Nathan Drake and company to life.

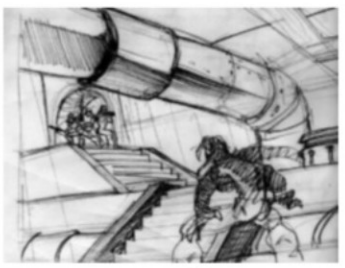
"On *Soul Reaver* we worked with Gordon Hunt, a great director with many years of wonderful work in theatre, television and movies. Gordon was the director of performance capture for the *Uncharted* games, too, and I think the very strong relationship that he and Amy have is part of what has made the performances in *Uncharted* and *Soul Reaver* so strong.

"AS A DESIGNER, I ALWAYS WORK AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE WITH THE AUDIO PEOPLE"

One of the most important elements of capturing *Soul Reaver*'s acting performances was a simple one: get all the actors in a room together and reading their lines as a group. "That was very unusual for videogame recording at the time and, unfortunately, it still is. In many cases, actors are still brought in to record lines individually," renounces Lemarchand.

"All of the experience that Gordon brings to the process has worked so well with the talents of the amazing actors. They say that 'acting is reacting', so it would make sense that we would get the very best performances by putting them within an emotional environment where they could act with one another.

"I think *Soul Reaver* marked a turning point in the way people think about performance in videogames. Although, I think it's only very recently that those ideas have begun to catch on across the industry. I think the fact that we begun to work this way 15 years ago is testament to Amy's vision for best practices in creating this kind of game."





Soul Reaver is one of those rare games upon which you can look back and identify very specifically the beginnings of ideas and elements that we highlight as 'best in class' in videogames today. The pacing, the weaving of game mechanics into the narrative, the performance capture and the adaptive audio blend to form a whole so complete that few games have managed to achieve something similar in the 15 years since its launch.

"We have a huge amount to learn from past games," Lemarchand tells us. "I do think people are now learning the lessons that are there to be learned from the design of historical games, but perhaps we could all stand to look back to the history of games a little bit more than we do."

PLAY PLUS

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INTERVIEW

HUNGRY FOR MORE FOOTBALL

Our appetite for the beautiful game remains as strong as Suarez's...

We sit down with *FIFA 15*'s lead producer Sebastian Enrique to talk about goalkeeping, a digital Premier League, women's football and handling the increasing gap between console generations.

Goalkeepers have undergone a seemingly enormous shift, with new animation and intelligence systems. Has changing them been one of the biggest tasks?
Yes, certainly. The only AI problem more difficult than goalkeepers is general player positioning, and that's because if the goalkeeper ever makes a big mistake or fails to do something he should definitely be able to do then players immediately want to throw their controllers out of the window. It's so obvious when a goalkeeper makes a mistake, which makes them difficult to get right.

When we got to understand what was possible on next-gen, we said right away that we need to improve goalkeepers to the point we always wanted them to reach. So we thought about how to improve their positioning, their reactions, their ability to analyse what is happening around them and decide what they should try to do themselves and what they should leave for their defenders.

Goalkeepers can also change their minds now, so they might decide to go in for a lunging tackle or to punch the ball out during a corner, but they can decide it's not the right idea and do something else. The processing required to compute that level of analysis and reaction just wasn't available to us before now.

> "SCANNING ALL THE FACES OF EVERY PLAYER IS A LOGISTICAL NIGHTMARE"

Do you decide what to include in each new game based on what the technology allows?
To an extent, but much of what we're doing is based on what the community has told us they want. Goalkeepers was one of those things, but it just so happens that the technology finally allows us to do them properly. Better team management options is another thing that has been requested often by the community, which is another very complex element that is difficult to get right because it's embedded in every game mode.

Our objective for team management was to add more depth that can be used across all modes, but specifically when it comes to career mode. The 'team sheet' option, for example, is really useful in career mode. You might be playing as a mediocre team, so you might want to use different tactics for when you're going against the stronger teams and the weaker teams. You can set up two different team sheets for this, which might have the exact same players on both but the tactics and the player instructions are completely different. If you're playing against Liverpool or Chelsea you might use your defensive team sheet, if you're

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playing against Crystal Palace – no offence to Palace fans [laughs] – then you might use the attacking one.

The team sheets and new player instruction options add quite a bit of optional depth, but are you at a disadvantage if you don't engage with it?

I don't think you are, no. The player instructions are not so much about giving you an advantage, they're about letting you play more closely to how you want to play. That doesn't mean you're going to be necessarily better than someone not using player instructions – it just means you're playing in a different way.

Also, with the online modes, the matchmaking will always be able to take care of any issues relating to different skill levels of players. You won't get someone that's incredible at the game playing someone that's just learning or perhaps isn't so good.

You're including all 20 Premier League stadiums, and you've captured the face of every Premiership player. Why is this the first year you've done it?

It takes an incredible amount of resources to build that quantity of content, and sourcing it is not easy or cheap. Also, getting access is not always easy and you need the right partnerships



to make it happen. EA Sports is the official partner of the Premier League now, so that comes with a lot of advantages for us and allows us to add authenticity by including all the stadiums and things like that.

Scanning all the faces of every player is a logistical nightmare to get right, much harder than scanning the stadiums. Some of the clubs are more open to it than others and getting all the players in the same place on the same day is not always easy, whereas for the stadiums you don't need any players or anyone else there. You just go and scan them when you can get access. But then creating a digital version of the stadium, with the proper lighting and textures, is something that takes a long time.

Have you talked about including female teams and players?

We have thought about it, yes, and we get asked about doing it. People ask us for a lot of things every year, including female teams and even including *FIFA Street* within a *FIFA* game as a five-a-side mode. And that's good – I want people to tell us what they want in the game. It's always a matter of balancing what we want to build with what we can build, though. We always need to make sure that what we can build and what we include ends up being the right package and so far women's football hasn't made the cut.

The gap between the current-gen and the previous-gen versions of *FIFA 15* seems to be quite big...

Absolutely, and I'm not going to say that that isn't the case. It is the case. For *FIFA 14* I was in charge of the PS3 generation, for *FIFA 15* I'm in charge of the next-gen version. As soon as I took over I told my guys 'forget about previous-gen', so that we could concentrate on making the best possible game rather than trying to make features that fit across both generations.

There's a lot of things that are not going to appear in the previous-gen versions of the game, especially things that require the extra processing power and memory. Some things are in previous-gen, though, like the new dribbling and player responsiveness. But, yes, there are a lot of features you'll only see in the next-gen version of *FIFA 15*.



EXTENDED PLAY

RESOGUN

The first game a lot of us played on PS4 is still one of the best, with few shooters out there as endlessly playable and immediately fun as Housemarque's modern classic, Resogun. But if you need some reasons to go back to it, there are several...

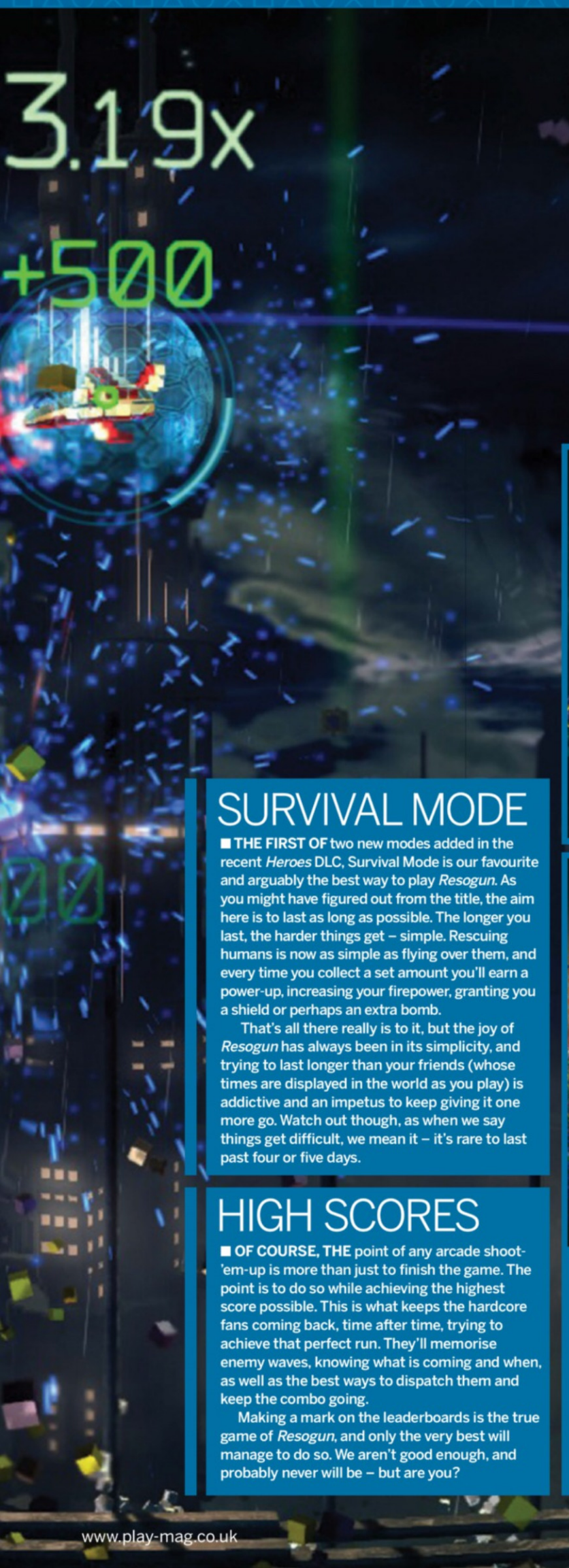


THE SHIP EDITOR

■ **FREE DLC FOR** every *Resogun* owner the ship editor is an excellent addition to the game. It's a breeze to use, as the entire game is based around voxel graphics, every model made of big 3D cubes. Making your own ship is as simple as creating a shape with these cubes, with multiple colours and sizes available. People have already created thousands of ships, from perfect recreations of Mario sprites to a tiny, airborne version of Professor Stephen Hawking.

It's not just looks though, as you can change the way your custom ships control and what weaponry they are packing. This opens things up from the three ships of before to thousands of combinations of speed, power and weaponry. You can even create ships with no overdrive or boost, if you are feeling risky. Best of all, you can share your ships online, so even if you can't be bothered to make any, there are hundreds of thousands of brilliant ones ready to download.

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SURVIVAL MODE

■ **THE FIRST OF** two new modes added in the recent *Heroes* DLC, Survival Mode is our favourite and arguably the best way to play *Resogun*. As you might have figured out from the title, the aim here is to last as long as possible. The longer you last, the harder things get – simple. Rescuing humans is now as simple as flying over them, and every time you collect a set amount you'll earn a power-up, increasing your firepower, granting you a shield or perhaps an extra bomb.

That's all there really is to it, but the joy of *Resogun* has always been in its simplicity, and trying to last longer than your friends (whose times are displayed in the world as you play) is addictive and an impetus to keep giving it one more go. Watch out though, as when we say things get difficult, we mean it – it's rare to last past four or five days.

HIGH SCORES

■ **OF COURSE, THE** point of any arcade shoot-'em-up is more than just to finish the game. The point is to do so while achieving the highest score possible. This is what keeps the hardcore fans coming back, time after time, trying to achieve that perfect run. They'll memorise enemy waves, knowing what is coming and when, as well as the best ways to dispatch them and keep the combo going.

Making a mark on the leaderboards is the true game of *Resogun*, and only the very best will manage to do so. We aren't good enough, and probably never will be – but are you?





DEMOLITION MODE

■ **THE OTHER NEW** mode is a weird one, and it totally changes the way *Resogun* is played. In Demolition mode, you don't have a gun at all. Your only weapon is a small burst that can only be used sporadically. Alone it doesn't do much, too small to take out more than a few foes at a time. So how do you make any progress?

The real point of your burst is to propel a ball that will be hovering around the stage somewhere. The aim is to send it flying through as many enemies as possible before circling round and hitting it again as it comes to a stop. It feels like a bizarre mixture of pinball, pachinko and *Gradius*, and takes a while to get used to after playing all the other *Resogun* modes. Play well and you'll find more balls to bash around, eventually sending multiple spheres of death flying off with every shot. It's crazy, kinetic and fun, but so far removed from 'real' *Resogun* that it almost feels like a different game.



THE BLUFFER'S GUIDE TO RESIDENT EVIL



WHAT IS IT?

■ **WHO KNOWS HOW** the history of games would have differed without *Resident Evil*. While it didn't invent the survival-horror genre, it defined and popularised it for the masses. Even if you haven't played a *Resident Evil* game (what have you been doing with your life?) then you'll at least know what it is. While the series has fallen from grace in recent years, the name still holds enormous weight.

The first three *Resident Evil* games on PlayStation were unlike anything anyone had ever played before, a mixture of adventure, puzzle solving and action dipped in a vat of zombie horror and unleashed upon the unwitting masses. We'd bet that a fair few of you were scarred for life by the early cutscene where you come across your first zombie, the rubbish CG looking dated as hell now but managing to be terrifying at the time. Over the years, the games have veered away from slow-paced horror to become more action focused, a direction that most have rallied against.



THE STORY SO FAR

■ **THE FIRST RESI** featured Raccoon City's elite STARS police unit as they investigate a strange incident in an isolated mansion in the woods. The incident turns out to be the release of the T-Virus, turning humans into zombies as well as creating all manner of other horrific creatures. Turns out the pharmaceutical company Umbrella is behind it, with the mansion a mask for a secret lab below. STARS members Chris Redfield and Jill Valentine save the day, taking down the villainous Albert Wesker in the process.

The next two games detail the pandemic spreading to Raccoon City. From here, the series treads further afield, with new types of enemies, new evil corporations and new, action-heavy gameplay. There is a running plot of sorts about Wesker and his plans for world domination, but Chris seemingly puts a stop to this in *Resi 5*, with *6* featuring a whole new set of bad guys. The plot is a load of old guff, but in a fun, B-movie sort of way, and some of the main heroes have entered into the upper tier of gaming legends.



WHERE TO START

■ **THIS IS A** tough question. It's easy for us to say, with rose-tinted nostalgia glasses, that you should go back to the start and begin with the original *Resi*. Thing is, it hasn't aged that well, with blocky graphics, stiff movement and atrocious voice acting. Despite this, it's still a great game, and if you don't mind playing something almost 20 years old, this is what we'd recommend. Alternatively, a remake of the game came out on GameCube and Wii, and a HD version is coming to PlayStation soon – it'lll l be just as good as, if not better than, the original.

The other two options are *Resi 2* and *Resi 4*. *Resi 2* was a vast improvement over the first game (indeed, it's our favourite of the whole series) and is the quintessential old-school *Resident Evil* experience, perfect for people who want an idea of what made people fall in love with the games way back when. *Resi 4* was a huge departure for the series, but a successful one, updating the classic gameplay for a new generation. It's one of the best games ever made, and a must-play for any gamer. Unfortunately, *5* and *6* took the new action focus too far, and while still enjoyable, lack the horror and tension of a true *Resident Evil*.



ANY SPIN-OFFS?

■ **YES, LOADS. THE** main series consists of nine games, the seven numbered entries (don't forget *Resident Evil 0*!) as well as *Code: Veronica*, which takes place between *3* and *4*, and *Revelations*, occurring after *Resi 4*. Besides these, there a bunch of extra games, from the lightgun *Survivor* games on PSone and PlayStation 2 and online *Outbreak* games to various Nintendo handheld versions. None of these are crucial, although the *Chronicles HD Collection* on PlayStation 3 collects two Wii lightgun games that are good fun, retelling the original few stories with some added content.



ANYTHING BESIDES GAMES?

■ **JUST A BIT!** You are probably familiar with the *Resident Evil* movies, which started off vaguely similar to the games before diverging off into post-apocalyptic superhero nonsense. Still, they've made a ton of money and a sixth one is on the way, so somebody out there must enjoy them. There are also two CG movies that are canon with the games, both starring Leon, both again quite rubbish. You've also got *Resident Evil* novels, comic books, action figures, replica weapons and loads of other memorabilia. It's a big franchise!

WHO ARE THESE GUYS?



CHRIS REDFIELD

One of the most frequently featured characters, Chris Redfield is introduced as a young member of STARS who manages to survive the mansion incident. He later wages a crusade against Umbrella before founding the BSAA, an organisation dedicated to fighting bioterrorism. He has huge arms and likes to punch boulders.



JILL VALENTINE

The other main character of *Resi 1* and the hero of *3*, Jill is another member of STARS who also dedicates her life to fighting Umbrella and bioterrorism. She founds the BSAA with Chris but is captured and brainwashed by Wesker, forced to do his bidding before eventually being rescued. She is a master of unlocking.



LEON S KENNEDY

A rookie cop whose first day in Raccoon City happens to be the day of the zombie outbreak, Leon teams up with Chris's sister Claire to escape. He later becomes a special operative for the US government and stars in *Resi 4* and *6*, becoming just as well known, if not more so, than Chris. He has excellent hair.



ALBERT WESKER

The main villain for the majority of the series, Wesker is a member of STARS who is secretly working for Umbrella. He later forges his own path, somehow gaining superpowers from a variety of viruses and deciding to purge the world before eventually being stopped by Chris. He has great taste in sunglasses.

TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE

ROAD NOT TAKEN

PLATFORM: PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5
TROPHIES: 20 0 0 1 19

■ **THIS QUIRKY PUZZLER** will have you scratching your head, and while there isn't a Platinum Trophy here, those that are included will – at the very least – get you thinking even more. There are some basic ones for doing simple tasks – making a fire, chopping wood, banning an item (from your home's basement) – but there's some to watch out for. Combining a red ghost and two white ones will make an Angry Spirit, unlocking 'Doomed'. You'll need to play through a career completely three times for 'Dedicated Ranger', so while you're doing that be sure use your second and third playthroughs to not to step on any spirits *ever* for 'Spiritual' and, similarly, don't eat any meat at all for 'Vegetarian'. Another tricky Trophy is 'Grounded', which is unlocked after completing a full career without teleporting or using a Shrine at any point – simple enough, but watch out for things that might force you to teleport.





FEZ

PLATFORM: PS4 /PS3/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 4/5
TROPHIES: 12 0 1 4 7

■ **THIS PUZZLE PLATFORMER** is actually pretty tricky, but if you follow a guide alongside any solutions you can't do then the Trophies associated with them are actually pretty easy – even if there aren't many of them. You'll need to collect all 32 Golden Cubes and 32 Anti-Cubes to get the majority of the Trophies in the game, but two fairly cryptic ones you can get early on are 'Trophy unlocked' and 'Cryptographer'. The former can be collected in the first room after collecting the hat – simply tap R2, R2, L2, R2, R2, L2, L2, L2 then collect the Anti-Cube. After that in the room below find the painting with symbols on them pointing in particular directions; while facing the painting press R2, R2, L2, R2, L2, L2, L2, R2 and then collect the second Anti-Cube that appears. That'll start you off, but there's a lot of complexity hidden in *Fez* so a full guide might be handy for you here...

METRICO

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5
TROPHIES: 11 0 1 5 5

■ **WITH ONLY 11** Trophies there isn't much to keep you playing *Metrico*, but each stage does have its own specific Trophy, so here's how:

- **'Getting into the mood'**: as soon as you gain control of your character use all forms of interactions you can – Up, Down, Left, Right, X, Circle, Square, Triangle, both shoulder buttons, tap the front and rear touchscreens and shake the Vita. Trophy unlocked.
- **'Minimizing jumps'**: World 1 can be completed in 41 jumps, this Trophy requires you to do it in 42 or less. Simply don't jump unless you absolutely need to, and if you fail two jumps restart.
- **'Mortality rate=zero'**: Just don't die in World 2 for this Trophy.
- **'Low casualty rate'**: For this one simply complete the level killing no more than 17 enemies. The level can be completed by killing 15, so it should be pretty easy.
- **'Efficient mind'**: Complete World 4 without pressing Circle to reset and this Trophy is yours. If you do fail and need to reset, there is usually a pit you can jump into.
- **'Single perspective'**: You need to complete World 5 without tilting the PS Vita. It can be hard to do (it is a portable device), so consider resting it on a flat surface or something instead.
- **'Optimized mind'**: As with World 4, you need to complete World 6 without pressing Triangle. You can still press Circle, however, so if you do mess up it might be worth doing that instead.
- **'Following the masses' & 'Einzenganger'**: You'll encounter doors through the game. Head through four doors where more than 50 per cent of people picked that one for a Trophy, and four doors where less than 50 per cent of people picked it for the other. Easy.





CRYSIS 3

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 4/5
TROPHIES: 51 1 1 15 34

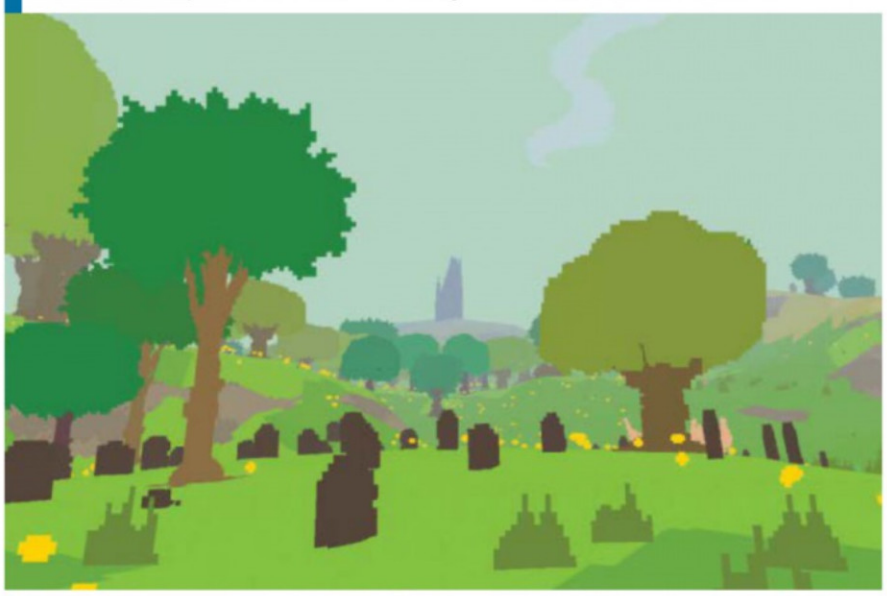
■ **THERE'S NOT MUCH** to get excited about with *Crysis 3*'s Trophies – it's standard FPS fare, collectibles and all. Save yourself some time by playing it on Supersoldier difficulty because, if you've played an FPS in the last decade or so, you won't have many more problems than any other single-player campaign. There's a bunch of multiplayer Trophies too and while they're all easy to figure out by their descriptions alone, you'll still need to play enough to reach at least Rank 20. As for the single-player Trophies, almost all of them are associated with killing enemies in particular ways, with most unlocking as par for the course. 'Arrow to the knee!' is a *hilarious* reference to *Skyrim*, whereby you need to shoot an enemy in the knee with your bow (try it on stationary targets). And there's 'Poltergeist', which requires you to kill ten enemies with thrown weapons without being seen; simple enough, but not something you're likely to do of your own accord.

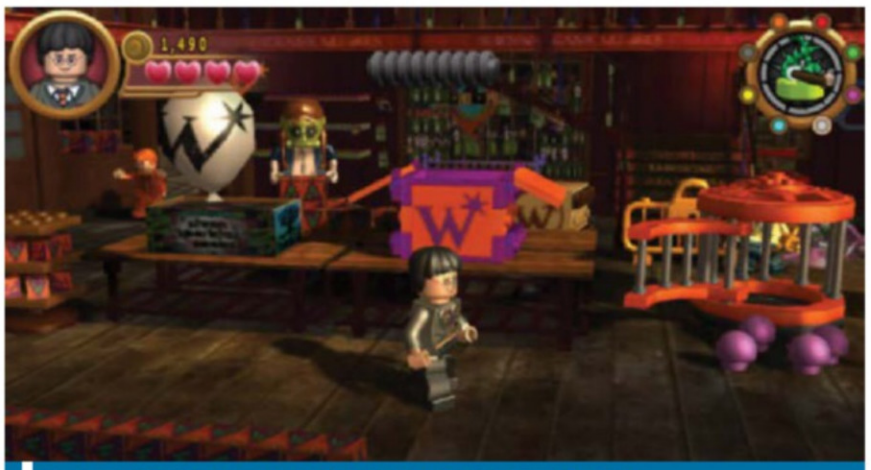


PROTEUS

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5
TROPHIES: 11 0 1 4 6

■ **THERE ISN'T MUCH** to the Trophies of *Proteus*, but then again there isn't much to the game either. You'll have to play through three times to get all the Trophies, so keep an eye out for particular landmarks as you explore the randomly generated island. There are Trophies for sitting on top of a snowy mountain for 15-20 minutes, for seeing every plant in each of the four seasons, for travelling the whole island by beach as well as walking on all the paths of the island. For 'The Hidden Door' you should use the tree-trunk-shaped towers to teleport from point-to-point until it unlocks. Finally there's 'Unravelling the Landscape', which requires you to touch each of the island's rows of stones in the right direction to trigger a tone (and the nearby flowers will dance); watch out for this one, since you could miss some sets of stones.





LEGO HARRY POTTER: YEARS 5-7

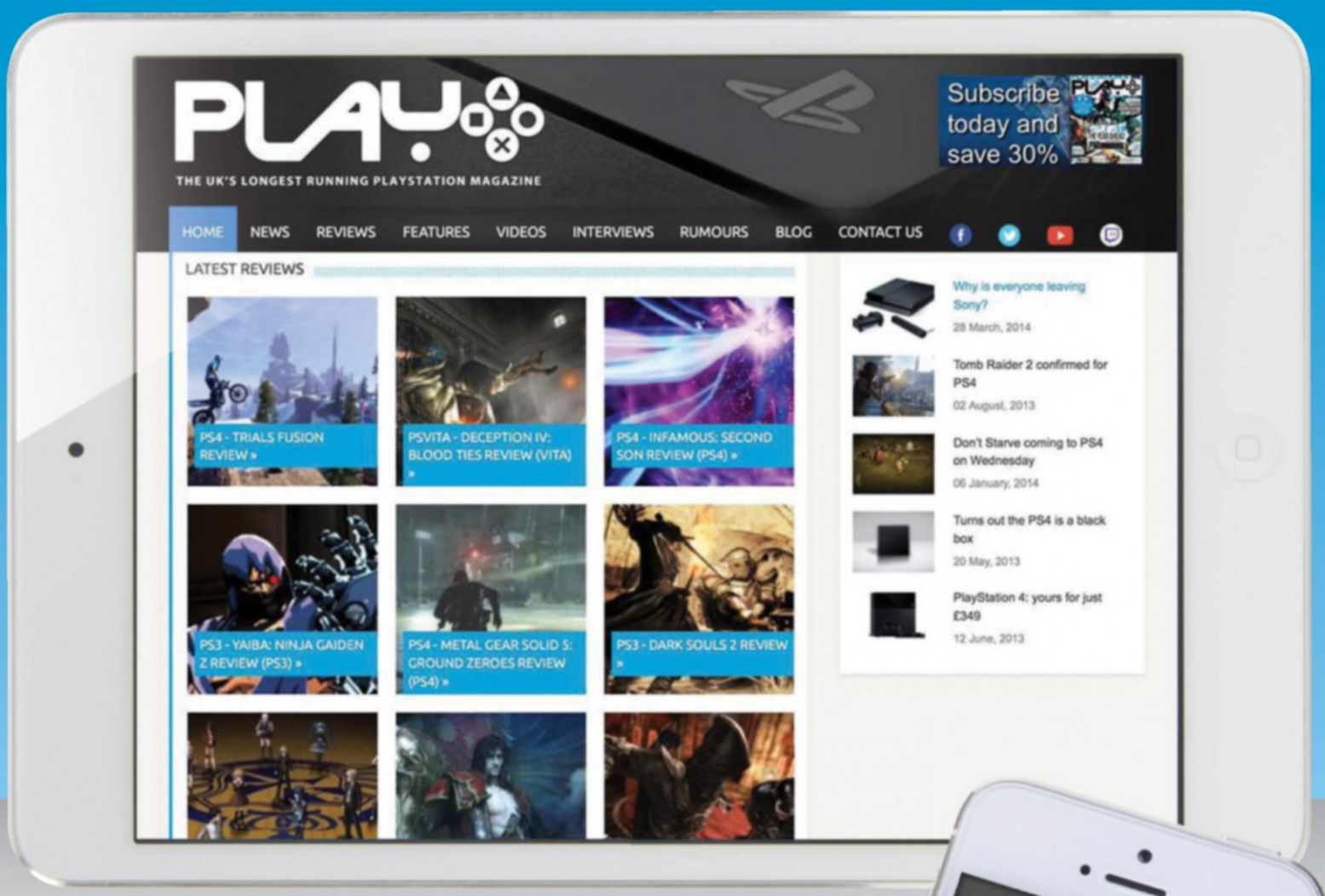
PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5
TROPHIES: 41 1 3 15 22

■ **AS ALWAYS, EXPECT** very little different from the Trophies of this Lego game. Finish the game, collect studs then mop up all the collectibles in Free Play. You'll have most of the Trophies by then. Duelling will play a large part of that, and though it's not particularly easy you should have no trouble reaching the last level and unlocking 'Master Dueller'. Additionally there are the usual character-specific Trophies and, though fairly self-explanatory, can't always be unlocked until later in the game once you've bought them in the Wardrobe and played them either in certain Free Play missions or in the hub section. There are a couple of ones to watch out for, however; 'Bellatrix Beaten', for example, requires you to play as Molly Weasley in the final battle without taking damage (and if you do, let yourself get finished off to restart the fight). Then there's 'Falling to pieces', which requires you to take six or more attempts at solving a painting puzzle (which you can obviously fail on purpose).

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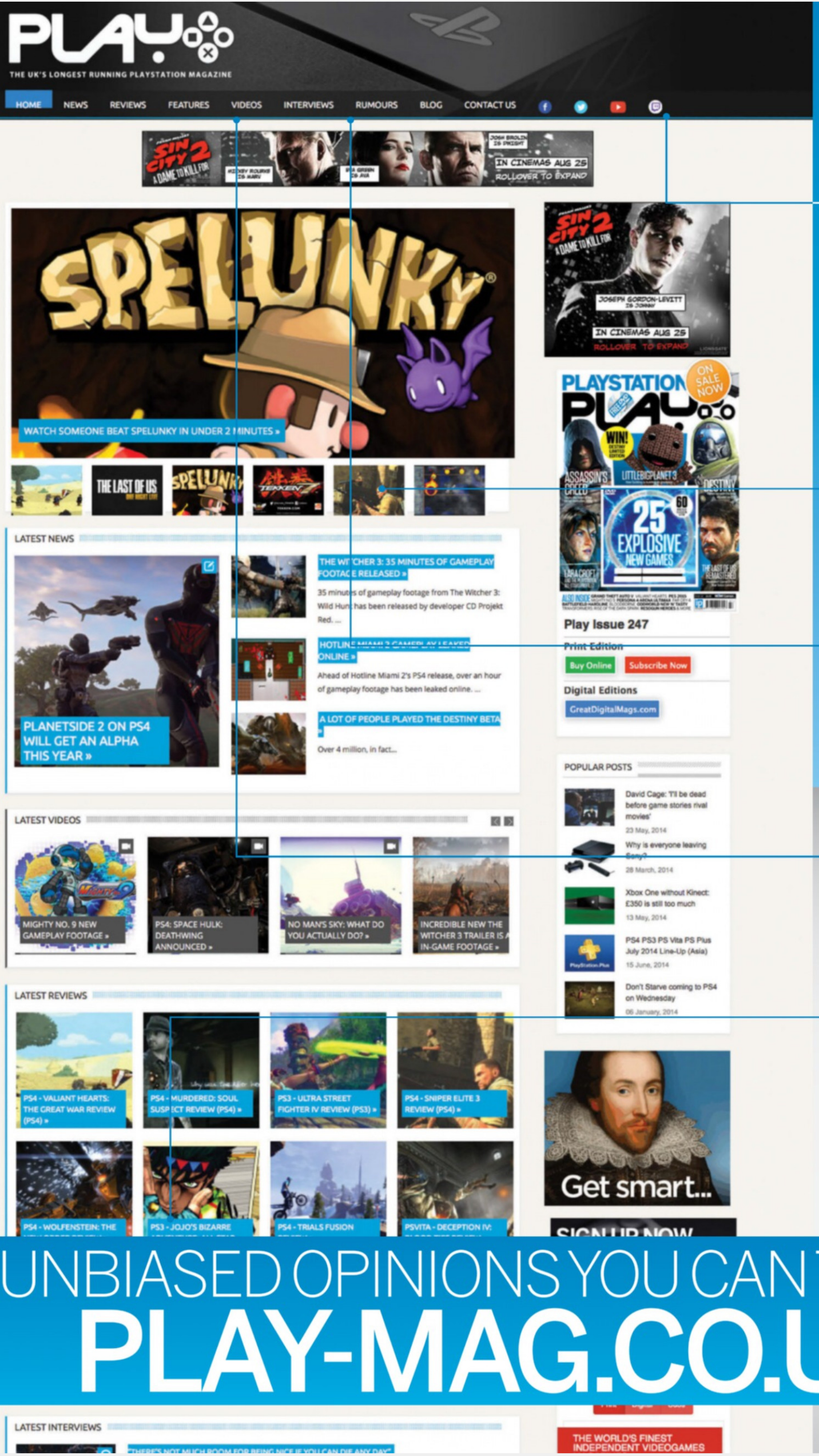
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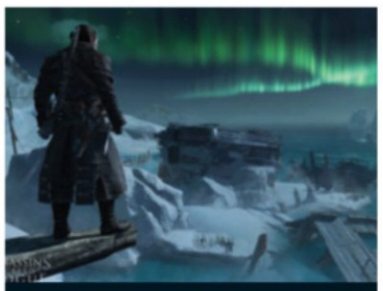
SPELUNKY
SEE THE GAME FINISHED IN UNDER TWO MINUTES



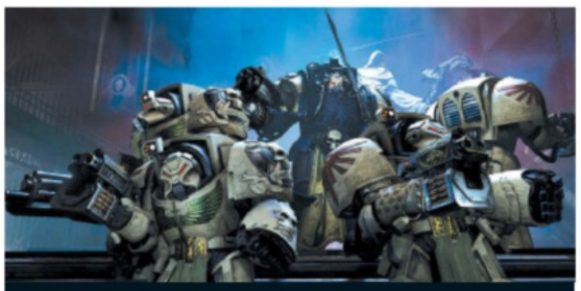
BLOODBORNE
PREPARE TO DESPAIR



MIGHTY NO 9
MEGA MAN LIVES ON... SORT OF



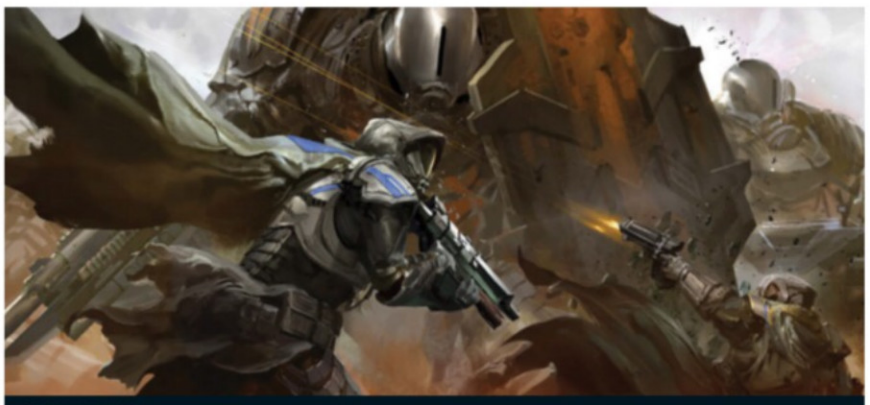
ASSASSIN'S CREED: ROGUE
I'M SAILING AWAY



SPACE HULK: DEATHWING
BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD



FINAL FANTASY XIV
A NEW PATCH MEANS NEW ADVENTURES



DESTINY
BETTER THAN HALO, BIGGER THAN BORDERLANDS?

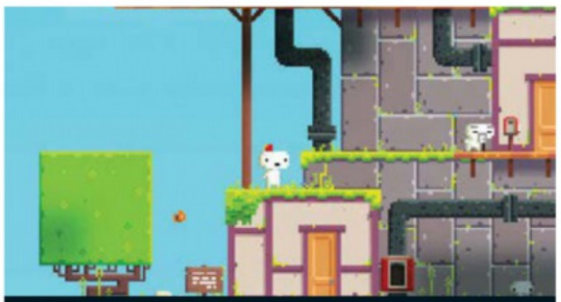
twitch LIVE GAMEPLAY STREAMING

Join the **Play** team for live streaming events and shared gameplay

twitch.tv/PlayUK

TOURNAMENTS!

Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels for information on our Twitch tournaments, where you can play videogames with us for the world to watch! The game changes each time, and the best players will win prizes – free games, or some of the other tat around our office. Come and join in the fun next time and you could win something neat.



FEZ

One of the best indie games in recent memory finally hit PlayStation platforms a few months ago, after an agonising wait. Free on PS Plus last month, *Fez* is a joy to simply play around in, solving puzzles and enjoying the great visuals and music as you go. Join us in confusion.

YouTube EXCLUSIVE VOICEOVERS

youtube.com/PlayMagUK

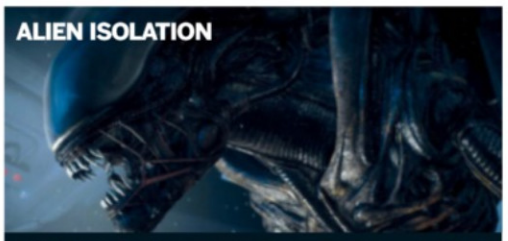
Subscribe to our channel for PlayStation video reviews and previews

GOD OF WAR



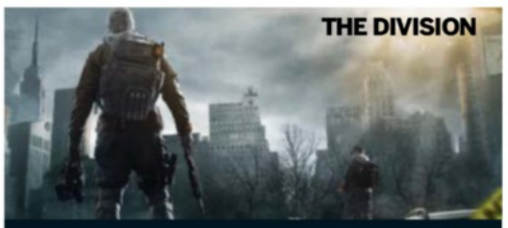
OUR SERIES RETROSPECTIVE of *God Of War* goes back to the start before working its way through to the present day, and beyond...

ALIEN ISOLATION



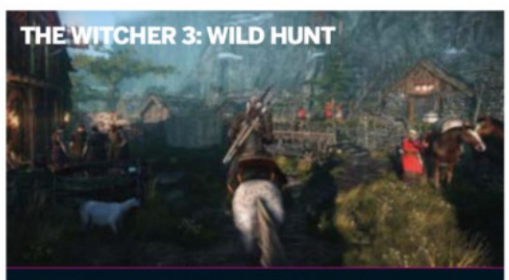
IN SPACE, NO one can hear you scream. In our flat, all our neighbours can.

THE DIVISION



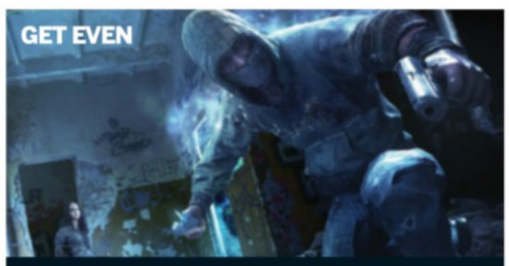
TOM CLANCY'S NAME lives on in this excellent-looking shooter.

THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT



WHICH WITCHER IS witchiest?

GET EVEN

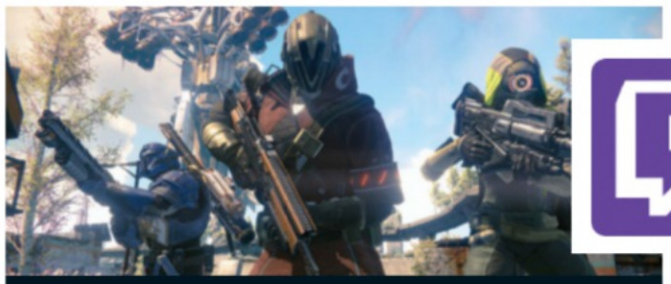


IT LOOKS INCREDIBLE but... what is it?

BORDERLANDS: THE PRE-SEQUEL

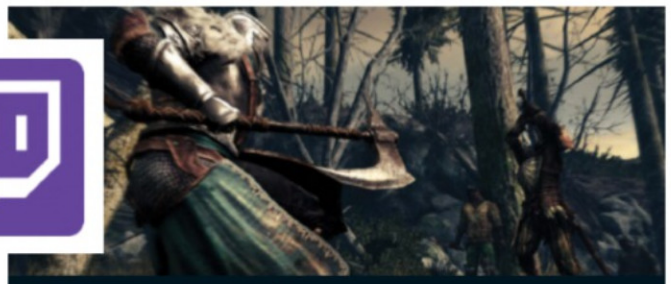


MORE BORDERLANDS IS never a bad thing, so we've taken the time to detail exactly why you should care about the upcoming spinoff.



DESTINY

Haven't jumped on the *Destiny* bandwagon yet? Well, we have, so if you fancy seeing just what all the hype is about, come watch us explore Bungie's fantastical post-apocalyptic future. We'll be exploring the stars, shooting some aliens and sucking at PvP. Hooray!



DARK SOULS II

The new *Dark Souls II* DLC is great fun, and still hard as nails. Fancy watching us die a few (hundred) times? You know where to go. These new areas are even more difficult and sadistic than the main game, so you're sure to catch us raging, crying and dying plenty.

SHARING



PS4: THE COMPLETE MANUAL

If a monthly dose of **Play** isn't enough, check out Imagine Publishing's bookazine, **PS4 The Complete Manual**. It's a guide to your new console, from basic stuff through to advanced tips, along with a verdict on every game currently available. Pick it up for only £7.99 in any good mag retailer, or order one from **greatdigitalmags.com**.



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NOW Gamer

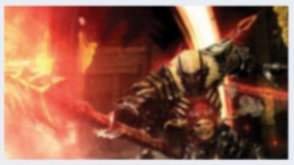
NOWGAMER

All the breaking videogames news, exclusive videos and expert comment can be found on our multi-format website... **www.nowgamer.com**

PlayList

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT A GAME SCORED THEN THESE PAGES ARE FOR YOU

TEAM PICKS
VITA GAMES



top five
LUKE ALBIGÉS

1. Soul Sacrifice Delta
2. WipEout 2048
3. Toukiden: The Age Of Demons
4. SteamWorld Dig
5. Hatsune Miku Project Diva f



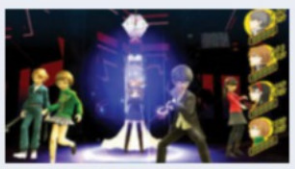
top five
LIAM WARR

1. Terraria
2. Hotline Miami
3. Fez
4. Metrico
5. Virtua Tennis 4



top five
STEVE HOLMES

1. Hotline Miami
2. Uncharted: Golden Abyss
3. Dragon's Crown
4. Killzone: Mercenary
5. Rogue Legacy



top five
SAM SMITH

1. Persona 4 Golden
2. Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc
3. Virtue's Last Reward
4. Demon Gaze
5. WipEout 2048

PS4 LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	83%
Battlefield 4	**238**	**80%**
Bound By Flame	245	62%
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	**238**	**75%**
Child Of Light	244	79%
Daylight	**245**	**20%**
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	74%
Don't Starve	**240**	**81%**
Dynasty Warriors 8 Xtreme Legends Complete Edition	243	80%
EA Sports UFC	**246**	**75%**
Fez	**243**	**95%**
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	243	85%
inFamous: Second Son	**242**	**86%**
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	80%
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	**246**	**84%**
Knack	238	55%
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	**238**	**85%**
Lego The Hobbit	244	65%
Mercenary Kings	**244**	**85%**
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	85%
Murdered: Soul Suspect	**246**	**48%**
Need For Speed Rivals	238	83%
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	**244**	**60%**
Outlast	241	73%
Resogun	**238**	**91%**



An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, *Resogun* is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.

Resogun Heroes	**247**	**93%**
Skylanders Swap Force	238	77%
Sniper Elite III	**246**	**72%**
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	245	25%
The Last Of Us Remastered	**247**	**94%**
Thief	**241**	**70%**
Tiny Brains	240	68%
Transistor	**245**	**87%**
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	30%
Trials Fusion	**244**	**80%**
Valiant Hearts	247	64%
War Thunder	**239**	**80%**
Watch Dogs	245	80%
Wolfenstein: The New Order	**245**	**78%**

PS3 LISTING



007 Legends	225	44%
194 2: Joint Strike	**170**	**74%**
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	69%
3D Dot Game Heroes	**192**	**87%**
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	**211**	**78%**
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	**177**	**61%**
After Burner Climax	**193**	**91%**
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	**223**	**43%**
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Age Of Booty	**172**	**81%**
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	**207**	**57%**
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	**201**	**82%**
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	**230**	**45%**
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
All Zombies Must Die!	**214**	**64%**
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	**193**	**83%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	**194**	**73%**
Ape Escape	208	55%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	**239**	**70%**
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arcana Heart 3	**207**	**79%**
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Armored Core: For Answer	**173**	**65%**
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	**217**	**60%**
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	**188**	**65%**
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	**203**	**27%**
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	**186**	**89%**
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	**199**	**91%**
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	**216**	**67%**
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	**198**	**77%**
Backbreaker	193	70%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	**204**	**71%**
The Baconing	210	72%
Band Hero	**187**	**68%**
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	**211**	**94%**
Batman: Arkham Origins	**237**	**85%**
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield 1943	**182**	**89%**
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	**190**	**93%**
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	**219**	**44%**
Bayonetta*	**187**	**93%**
The Beatles: Rock Band	**184**	**96%**
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	**201**	**85%**
Beowulf	161	61%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	**207**	**86%**
Beyond: Two Souls	236	70%
Binary Domain	**216**	**70%**
Bionic Commando	179	82%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	**169**	**88%**
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
BioShock	**172**	**93%**
BioShock 2	**189**	**88%**
BioShock Infinite	**230**	**97%**
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	**163**	**43%**
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	**160**	**58%**
Blast Factor	152	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	**190**	**85%**
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	**198**	**94%**
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	**209**	**63%**
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blokus	**202**	**54%**
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blur	**193**	**86%**
Bodycount	210	54%
Bomberman Ultra	**185**	**82%**
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	**223**	**90%**



Borderlands 2 is an excellent lesson in sequel-making and is easily one of 2012's best games.

The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Braid	**188**	**93%**
Brink	206	67%
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	**233**	**83%**
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	**185**	**79%**
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	**235**	**57%**
Burnout Crash	211	79%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Burnout Paradise	**162**	**74%**
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Buzz! Quiz TV	**168**	**82%**
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Calling All Cars	**155**	**81%**
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	**173**	**68%**
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	**186**	**94%**
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	**199**	**94%**
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	**181**	**85%**
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	**208**	**30%**
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castle Crashers	**200**	**88%**
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	**197**	**85%**
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	81%
Carnival Island	**213**	**53%**
Catan	195	85%
Cars 2	**208**	**68%**
The Cave	230	77%
Catherine	**215**	**61%**
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	**178**	**87%**
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Chime Super Deluxe	**203**	**80%**
Civilization Revolution	**168**	**90%**
Clash Of The Titans	**193**	**65%**
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	**163**	**80%**
Colin McRae: DiRT	**158**	**91%**
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	**184**	**87%**
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Commander's Challenge	**185**	**68%**
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Comet Crash	**186**	**84%**
Comix Zone	210	62%
Conan	**160**	**71%**
Condemned 2	165	78%
Costume Quest	**199**	**70%**
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	**223**	**89%**
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	**218**	**37%**
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Create	**199**	**71%**
Critter Crunch	**188**	**91%**
Cross Edge	**182**	**59%**
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Crysis 2	**204**	**72%**
Crysis 3	230	61%
Cubixx HD	**207**	**76%**
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	**181**	**38%**
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	**201**	**52%**
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Mist	**164**	**53%**
The Darkness	**154**	**91%**
The Darkness II	**215**	**76%**
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	**211**	**90%**
Dark Souls II	**242**	**90%**
Darkstalkers Resurrection	**230**	**82%**
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	**188**	**83%**
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	**202**	**80%**
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	**223**	**78%**
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	**231**	**65%**
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	**211**	**61%**
Dead Space	172	87%

www.imagineshop.co.uk

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

The Last Of Us Remastered	94%
Valiant Hearts: The Great War	64%
Resogun Heroes	93%
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	30%
Sacred 3	60%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Dead Space 2	**201**	**92%**
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead Space: Extraction	**203**	**88%**
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	**192**	**68%**
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Dead Nation	**201**	**86%**
Deadpool	233	60%
DeathSpank	**195**	**83%**
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	**199**	**72%**
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	**193**	**92%**
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	**178**	**29%**
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	**209**	**91%**
Devil May Cry 4	**163**	**89%**
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	**235**	**89%**
Digger HD	186	52%
DiRT 3	**206**	**85%**
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	**175**	**81%**
Dishonored	**224**	**92%**
Disney Infinity	235	81%
DJ Hero	**186**	**91%**
DJ Hero 2	**198**	**88%**
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	**225**	**69%**
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
DmC Devil May Cry	**227**	**93%**



DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.

Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	**203**	**86%**
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	**168**	**61%**
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Driver: San Francisco	**209**	**68%**
Droplitz	**184**	**91%**
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
D&D: Chronicles Of Mystara	**233**	**80%**
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dust 514	**233**	**51%**
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	**176**	**43%**
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	**189**	**37%**
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	**181**	**44%**
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	**230**	**40%**
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
Earthworm Jim HD	**196**	**89%**
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	**215**	**75%**
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	**178**	**38%**
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	**169**	**85%**
echochrome II	202	83%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	**208**	**64%**
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	**152**	**91%**
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	**212**	**93%**
Elefunk	**170**	**45%**
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	**152**	**69%**
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	**197**	**83%**
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	**176**	**87%**
Eufloria	**212**	**85%**
Everybody's Golf 5	**158**	**88%**
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	**165**	**91%**
Explodemon	203	70%
Eye Of Judgment	**159**	**65%**
EyePet	185	83%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
F1 2010	**197**	**86%**
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	**223**	**79%**
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	**170**	**55%**
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	**173**	**97%**
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	**227**	**40%**
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	**172**	**74%**
Far Cry 3	226	88%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	**231**	**85%**
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	**168**	**65%**
FEAR	151	81%
FEAR 2: Project Origin	**176**	**87%**
FEAR 3	208	60%
FIFA 11	**197**	**91%**
FIFA 12	**210**	**86%**
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA 14	**236**	**90%**
FIFA Street (2012)	**217**	**74%**
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
Final Fight: Double Impact	**193**	**90%**
The Fight	**199**	**42%**
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	**151**	**87%**
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	**236**	**81%**
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	**214**	**80%**
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	**198**	**51%**
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Flight Control HD	**198**	**85%**
Flock!	179	70%
Folklore	**158**	**66%**
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Front Mission Evolved	**198**	**52%**
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
From Dust	**211**	**82%**
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	**151**	**69%**
Fuse	232	73%
Game Of Thrones	**220**	**39%**
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	**151**	**38%**
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	**219**	**60%**
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	**183**	**22%**
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	**178**	**38%**
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	**230**	**90%**



With brilliantly reworked combat mechanics and stunning graphics, *Ascension* is a gloriously violent prequel to the series.

God Of War Collection*	**188**	**93%**
God Of War Collection: Volume II	**210**	**70%**
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	**213**	**63%**
Gotham City Imposters	216	78%
Gran Turismo 5	**200**	**85%**
Gran Turismo 6	239	83%
Grand Theft Auto IV	**166**	**98%**
Grand Theft Auto V	**236**	**97%**



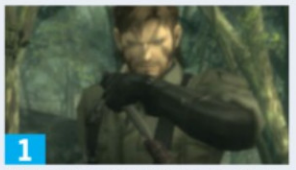
Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece; the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.

Greed Corp	**191**	**75%**
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	**219**	**22%**
Grid 2	232	79%
Grid Autosport	**246**	**67%**
GTI Club+	174	72%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	**191**	**94%**

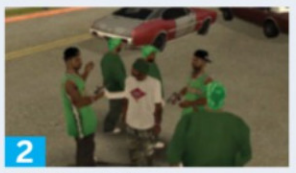
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Guardians Of Middle-earth	**227**	**71%**
Guitar Hero III	**160**	**90%**
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	**168**	**63%**
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	**179**	**88%**
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	**197**	**71%**
Guitar Hero World Tour	**173**	**95%**
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	**181**	**85%**
Hamsterball	194	72%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	**182**	**60%**
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	**167**	**64%**
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	**189**	**94%**
Heavy Weapon	**187**	**75%**
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	**225**	**93%**
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	**203**	**69%**
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	**212**	**75%**
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hustle Kings	**190**	**87%**
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
I Am Alive	**217**	**64%**
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	**210**	**94%**
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	**183**	**72%**
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	**180**	**81%**
inFamous 2	207	83%
Inferno Pool	**181**	**81%**
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	80%
Inversion	**220**	**49%**
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Iron Man	**166**	**58%**
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	**216**	**82%**
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	**199**	**63%**
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	**217**	**30%**
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	80%
Journey	**216**	**87%**
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Jurassic Park: The Game	**194**	**60%**
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	**160**	**73%**
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	**184**	**88%**
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killer Is Dead	**235**	**75%**
Killzone HD	225	65%
Killzone 2	**176**	**93%**
Killzone 3	**202**	**80%**
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	**215**	**70%**
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	**213**	**76%**
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung-Fu Live	**201**	**42%**
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	**196**	**65%**
Lair	158	52%
Landit Bandit	**195**	**66%**
LA Noire	**206**	**91%**
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	**198**	**90%**
The Last Guy	**171**	**91%**
Last Rebellion	**191**	**42%**
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	**174**	**54%**
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	**173**	**65%**
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	**194**	**79%**
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%

**denotes import review*

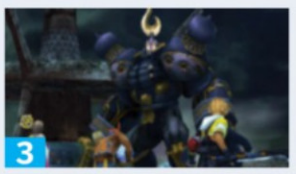
TOP TEN PLAYSTATION 2 GAMES



1 **Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater**



2 **GTA: San Andreas**



3 **Final Fantasy X**



4 **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3**



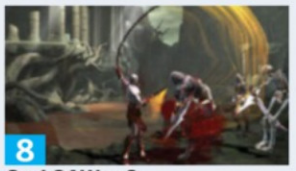
5 **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City**



6 **DMC 3: Dante's Awakening**



7 **Silent Hill 2**



8 **God Of War 2**

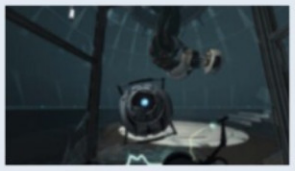


9 **Persona 3 FES**



10 **Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution**

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



STEPHEN MERCHANT
PLAY: PORTAL 2

One of the highlights of the excellent *Portal 2* is Stephen Merchant's brilliant performance as your bumbling AI companion, Wheatley. He's got a lot of character for a nondescript robot sphere.



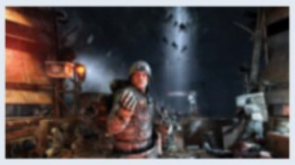
INDIANA JONES
PLAY: UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

It's no secret that *Uncharted* is strongly influenced by the classic Indiana Jones films, and it does a great job of bringing back that fun, Saturday morning adventure that we've missed so much. Essential.



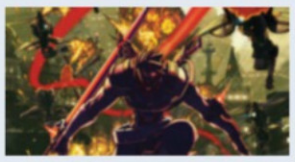
POMERAINIANS
PLAY: TOKYO JUNGLE

Sure you can play as a lion, a bear or even a dinosaur, but why would you want to when *Tokyo Jungle* also gives you the option to control a cuddly little Pomeranian? Awww.



TUNNELS
PLAY: METRO: LAST LIGHT

The majority of *Metro: Last Light* takes place in dank underground tunnels and sewers, as you take refuge from the apocalyptic wasteland above. Not one for claustrophobes, this.



STRIDING
PLAY: STRIDER

They see me striding, they hating. Patrolling and trying to catch me striding dirty. Can't a ninja just do his thing?

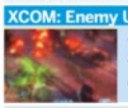
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	**167**	**73%**
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	**206**	**76%**
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	**160**	**76%**
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	**227**	**85%**
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
Limbo	**209**	**90%**
LittleBigPlanet	**172**	**94%**
LittleBigPlanet 2	**201**	**96%**
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
LocoRoco Cocorecco!	**159**	**80%**
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	**221**	**45%**
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	**175**	**52%**
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	**192**	**75%**
Lost Planet 3	236	58%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	**163**	**69%**
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
Lumines Supernova	**178**	**90%**
Madagascar 3	**224**	**39%**
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	**223**	**86%**
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	**220**	**70%**
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	**189**	**68%**
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker	202	84%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker 2012	**208**	**70%**
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	**182**	**90%**
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	**202**	**88%**
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	**185**	**57%**
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	**201**	**97%**
Mass Effect 3	**216**	**93%**
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	**161**	**85%**
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Mega Man 9	**172**	**75%**
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	**171**	**78%**
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	**228**	**91%**
 *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.		
Metal Gear Solid 4	**167**	**92%**
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	**214**	**91%**
Metro: Last Light	**231**	**60%**
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Microbot	**202**	**51%**
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	**202**	**38%**
Minecraft	**240**	**93%**
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	**173**	**71%**
MLB: The Show 14	**245**	**90%**
ModNation Racers	**192**	**90%**
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	**195**	**94%**
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	**205**	**81%**
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 10/11	**204**	**64%**
MotoGP 13	233	74%
Motorhead	**173**	**60%**
MotorStorm	**151**	**92%**
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	**203**	**76%**
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	**172**	**93%**
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV Alive	**206**	**42%**
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	**164**	**58%**
nail'd	201	61%
Namco Museum Essentials	**193**	**60%**
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	**217**	**53%**
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
Naughty Bear	**195**	**64%**
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	**224**	**88%**
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 09	**170**	**81%**
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Need For Speed Carbon	**151**	**76%**
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	**199**	**91%**
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	**225**	**95%**
 *Need For Speed: Most Wanted* is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	**161**	**86%**
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	**213**	**63%**
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	**215**	**39%**
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	**227**	**85%**
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	**198**	**89%**
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	**223**	**74%**
NiGHTS Into Dreams...	224	75%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	**154**	**88%**
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	**217**	**63%**
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
Noby Noby Boy	**177**	**85%**
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Nucleus	**155**	**82%**
Numblast	183	60%
Okami HD	**225**	**90%**
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	**224**	**69%**
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	**205**	**75%**
The Orange Box	**161**	**93%**
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	**180**	**80%**
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	**181**	**68%**
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	**201**	**91%**
Pain	**183**	**69%**
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Payday 2	**235**	**79%**
Peggle	**189**	**94%**
Persona 4 Arena	**231**	**91%**
 Essential for both *Persona* fans and fighting game enthusiasts, *Persona 4 Arena* is an absolute joy to play.		
PES 2010	**185**	**72%**
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	**210**	**74%**
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk 4am	**220**	**40%**
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Shooter	**187**	**93%**
PixelJunk Shooter 2	**204**	**90%**
PixelJunk SideScroller	**213**	**77%**
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	**160**	**74%**
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	**196**	**58%**
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	**204**	**54%**
Poker Night 2	232	55%
POTC: At World's End	**154**	**48%**
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	54%
Portal 2	**205**	**95%**
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: Classic	**173**	**67%**
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	**200**	**88%**
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	**181**	**76%**
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puddle	**216**	**76%**
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puppeteer	**236**	**70%**
Pure	171	80%
Puzzle Chronicles	**194**	**70%**
Puzzle Dimensions	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	**181**	**68%**
Quantum Conundrum	**221**	**90%**
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	**197**	**29%**
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Rachet & Clank: Q-Force	**227**	**52%**
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rage	**211**	**60%**
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Rainbow Six Vegas	**155**	**88%**
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Rango	**203**	**54%**
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	**211**	**68%**
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	**221**	**88%**
Rayman Legends	235	83%
Rayman Origins	**212**	**80%**
Red Dead Redemption	**193**	**92%**
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	**180**	**80%**
Remember Me	232	61%
Renegade Ops	**211**	**78%**
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	**211**	**72%**
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	**232**	**71%**
Resident Evil 4 HD	**210**	**93%**
Resident Evil 5	**177**	**86%**
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	**151**	**83%**
Resistance 2	**173**	**90%**
Resistance 3	**210**	**88%**
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Retro City Rampage	**228**	**78%**
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	**217**	**67%**
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rise Of The Argonauts	**176**	**58%**
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	64%
Risk: Factions	**202**	**80%**
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rock Band	**169**	**94%**
Rock Band 2	**179**	**96%**
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocksmith	**223**	**78%**
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	**209**	**49%**
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
RUSE	**197**	**82%**
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	**180**	**76%**
Sacred 3	247	60%
Saints Row 2	**172**	**79%**
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
SBK Generations	**220**	**51%**
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep1	**194**	**90%**
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep2	**194**	**92%**
Savage Moon	**175**	**87%**
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	**198**	**36%**
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	**195**	**92%**
Sega Rally Online Arcade	**208**	**74%**
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
Section 8: Prejudice	**209**	**80%**
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	**220**	**54%**
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	**158**	**92%**
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	**198**	**76%**
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shank	**197**	**86%**
Shatter	**183**	**91%**
Shaun White Skateboarding	**198**	**70%**
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	**177**	**32%**
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	**199**	**76%**
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Silent Hill: Downpour	**217**	**81%**
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	**174**	**64%**
The Simpsons Arcade Game	216	54%
The Simpsons Game	**160**	**82%**
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	**212**	**70%**
SingStar	159	80%
Singularity	**195**	**80%**
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skate	**159**	**86%**
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	**192**	**86%**
Skullgirls	218	88%
Sleeping Dogs	**222**	**80%**
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	**230**	**60%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sniper Elite V2	**218**	**52%**
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	**230**	**55%**
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic Adventure	**198**	**63%**
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	**214**	**82%**
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	**225**	**40%**
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	**227**	**88%**
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	**151**	**52%**
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	**219**	**76%**
SoulCalibur IV	**169**	**94%**
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
South Park: The Stick of Truth	**242**	**81%**
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	**155**	**33%**
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	**197**	**69%**
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Spin Jam	**174**	**32%**
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	**153**	**79%**
Split/Second: Velocity	**192**	**90%**
Sports Champions	**196**	**83%**
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	**216**	**45%**
Stacking	203	88%
Starhawk	**219**	**81%**
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	**231**	**52%**
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	**171**	**65%**
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Star Wars: Pinball	**230**	**79%**
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	**178**	**51%**
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	**209**	**92%**
Street Fighter IV	**176**	**95%**
Street Fighter X Tekken	**217**	**83%**
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	81%
Strider	**242**	**62%**
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	**151**	**83%**
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	**157**	**82%**
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	**190**	**55%**
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	**176**	**72%**
Super Street Fighter IV	**191**	**90%**
Supremacy MMA	**211**	**40%**
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	**199**	**88%**
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	**222**	**77%**
Tales Of Monkey Island	**196**	**91%**
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	**161**	**87%**
Tekken 6	**184**	**94%**
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	**223**	**90%**
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	**221**	**60%**
Tetris	202	84%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	**203**	**62%**
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	**233**	**94%**
 When *The Last Of Us* is good (winter), it's better than anything else this gen – we do not say that lightly.		
The Last Of Us: Left Behind	242	81%
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	**224**	**55%**
The Walking Dead	**231**	**92%**
 *The Walking Dead* should be required playing for anyone who considers themselves a fan of our favourite medium.		
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	**206**	**38%**
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%
Time Crisis 4	**166**	**69%**
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	**162**	**72%**
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	57%
TNA Impact!	**171**	**71%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	**173**	**80%**
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	75%
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	**196**	**69%**
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	**210**	**78%**
Tomb Raider	**229**	**90%**
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	**173**	**83%**
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	**223**	**73%**
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	**188**	**52%**
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	**198**	**53%**
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	**168**	**71%**
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Topotai: Spinning Through Worlds	**183**	**61%**
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	**208**	**64%**
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	**194**	**80%**
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	**159**	**50%**
Trine	184	85%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	**202**	**56%**
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	**200**	**17%**
Tumble	198	70%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	**165**	**40%**
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	**199**	**53%**
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	**203**	**64%**
UFC Undisputed 2009	**180**	**90%**
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	**215**	**82%**
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Ultra Street Fighter IV	**246**	**85%**
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	**185**	**96%**
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	**212**	**90%**
Under Siege	**207**	**71%**
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Ep1	233	05%
The Unfinished Swan	**225**	**78%**
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	**151**	**54%**
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	**189**	**76%**
Vanquish	**197**	**93%**
Viking: Battle For Asgard	**165**	**74%**
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	**220**	**90%**
Virtua Tennis 3	**150**	**91%**
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wakeboarding HD	**195**	**65%**
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	89%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	**234**	**83%**
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	**210**	**51%**
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	**202**	**14%**
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	**183**	**55%**
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	**184**	**41%**
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	**188**	**56%**
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	**207**	**49%**
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout HD	**172**	**84%**
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	**183**	**72%**
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
Worms Collection	**224**	**85%**
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	**217**	**80%**
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	**211**	**63%**
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WSC Real 11	**204**	**69%**
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	**178**	**80%**
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE 12	**212**	**50%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	**178**	**54%**
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	**224**	**94%**
 Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: *XCOM* is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Arcade	**203**	**60%**
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	**179**	**71%**
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	35%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	**216**	**60%**
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	**203**	**79%**
Yar's Rev	206	57%
Zen Pinball 2	**224**	**90%**
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	**213**	**69%**
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%
Zuma	**182**	**78%**

PS VITA LISTING

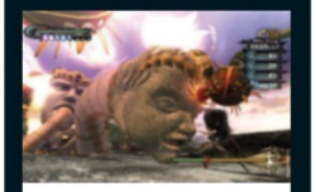


A-Men	**217**	**70%**
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	**225**	**76%**
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Everybody's Golf	**215**	**86%**
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	**227**	**18%**
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	85%
Dead Nation	**201**	**86%**
Destiny Of Spirits	244	76%
Dokuro	**230**	**71%**
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	**216**	**81%**
FIFA Football	216	80%
flOw	**151**	**90%**
Flower	176	85%
Gravity Crash	**187**	**85%**
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hotline Miami	**233**	**85%**
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Joe Danger	**194**	**96%**
Killzone: Mercenary	236	88%
LittleBigPlanet	**223**	**93%**
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	**216**	**85%**
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	**215**	**59%**
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	**217**	**81%**
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	**224**	**70%**
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	**230**	**60%**
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Orgarhythm	**230**	**55%**
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	**228**	**94%**
PixelJunk Monsters	**163**	**94%**
Puddle	**222**	**82%**
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	**215**	**52%**
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	**216**	**48%**
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	**225**	**32%**
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	70%
Soul Sacrifice	**232**	**85%**
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Superfrog HD	**234**	**41%**
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumioni: Demon Arts	**230**	**46%**
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Tearaway	**239**	**80%**
Terraria	232	85%
Touch My Katamari	**216**	**83%**
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	86%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	**216**	**80%**
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	**215**	**83%**
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	**233**	**80%**
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	**227**	**84%**
WipEout 2048	215	87%

*denotes import review

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Watch out! Games!



WHAT (have they been playing?)

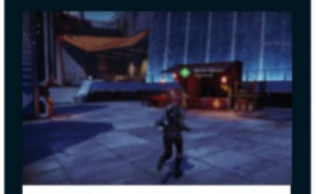
Bayonetta

WHY (was it chosen?)

Because it's still awesome

LUKE ALBIGÉS

USUALLY I USE this space to talk about the huge new releases that I've been rinsing lately. This time, I've decided to use it to remind the world that *Bayonetta* is one of the greatest action games ever made. The combo system is flexible, the action stylish and the story and cutscenes ludicrous – from over-the-top gunfights to classic Sega references, there's never a dull moment. You can pick it up for pennies now so if you haven't played Platinum's best game yet, I implore you to do so before silly season hits and you're drowning in new games.



WHAT (have they been playing?)

Destiny

WHY (was it chosen?)

Because it's MMO Halo!

SAM SMITH

I'VE LONG BEEN a Bungie fan, and so I was understandably very happy when it announced that it would no longer be developing exclusively for Microsoft systems. *Destiny* is basically *Halo* crossed with *Borderlands* and *World Of Warcraft*, and as such I can see myself playing it for a very long time to come. I've played *WOW* on and off for ten years now, so when a good MMO gets its hooks in me, I'm in for the long haul. But the real question is, will I still be playing *Destiny* in a decade? I sure hope so.

EVERY GAME. EVERY FORMAT. ONE CHOICE

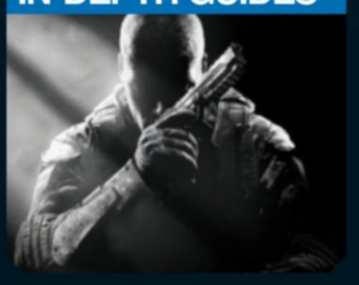
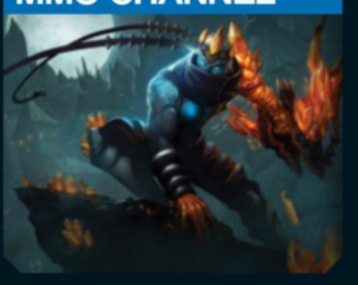
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Imaging Publishing Ltd
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Bournemouth Dorset BH2 6EZ
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Cover image

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13-Issue subscription UK £51.90 / Europe £70 / ROW £80

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Head of Circulation Darren Pearce
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Printing and Distribution

Printed by Wyndeham Heron, The Bentall Complex, Colchester Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4NW

Distributed in the UK, Eire & the Rest of the World by Marketforce, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU
☏ 0203 148 3300

Distributed in Australia by Network Services (a division of Bauer Media Group), Level 21 Civic Tower, 66-68 Goulburn Street, Sydney, New South Wales 2000, Australia
☏ + 61 2 8667 5288

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ISSN 1358-9474

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7,667 Jan-Dec 2013

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